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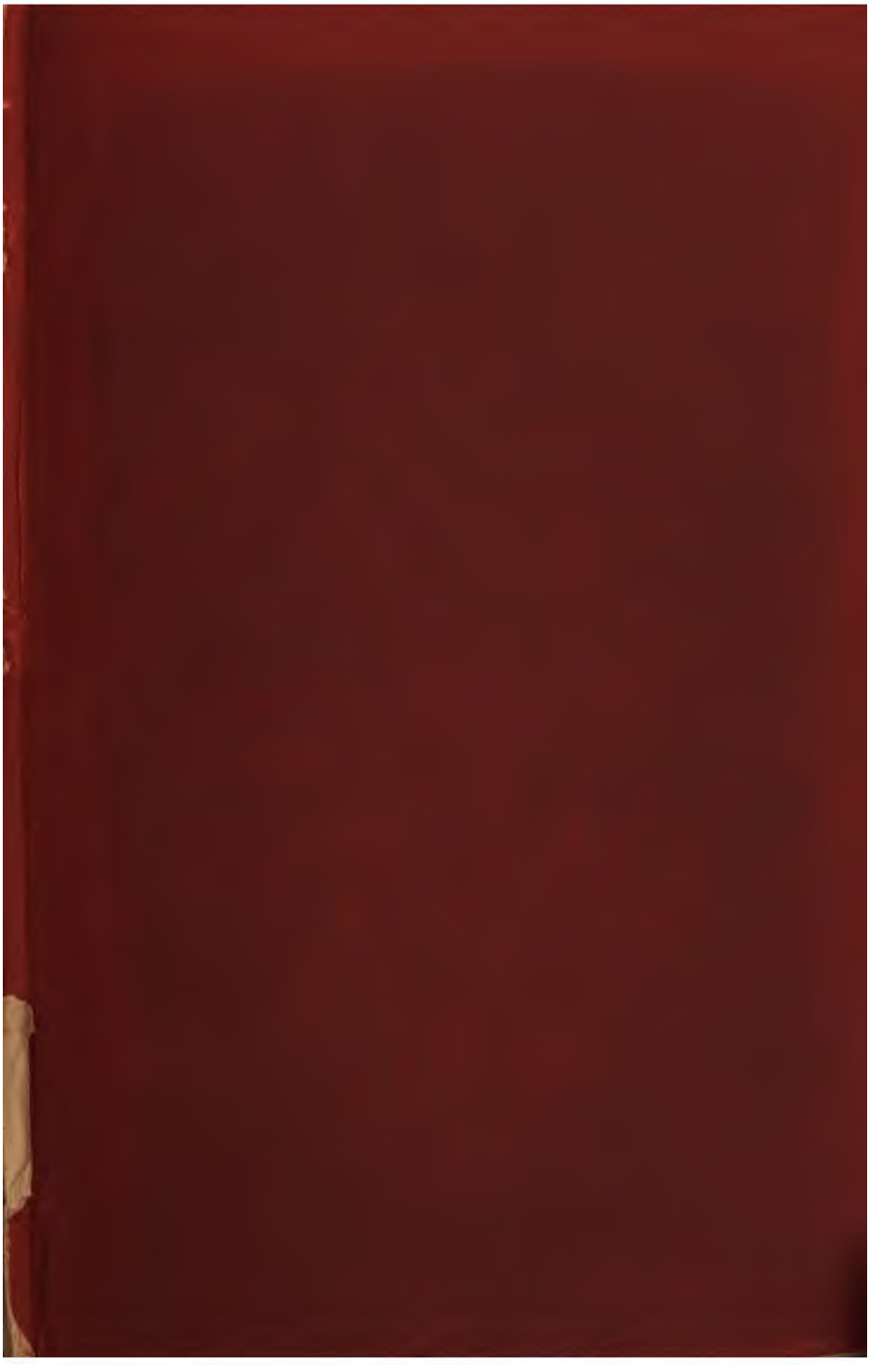

MODERN GERMAN MUSIC.

MODERN GERMAN MUSIC.

RECOLLECTIONS AND CRITICISMS.

BY

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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WEIMAR AND LEIPSIC.

WEIMAR AND LEIPSIC.

WEIMAR IN 1840.

From Frankfort to Leipsic—Goethe's house—Sonnets in the *Frauen-Platz*—M. Chelard—The analytical spirit of Weimar in Goethe's time unfavourable to a sound judgment of music—Madame Szymanowska—A notice of Hummel—His unconsciousness in composition—Zelter's judgment of him—His improvisation—The home-position of the great musicians of Germany.

WHETHER as regards health, spirits, or musical taste (the latter palled by inanimate repetitions of inferior works, or disappointed by imperfect versions of master compositions), it is hard to imagine a tonic better than the Leipsic Autumn Fair, as it was to be taken in 1839 and 1840.

From Berlin to Leipsic, the journey before railroads were made was singularly insipid, save for Wittemberg: from Frankfort, the road, two nights and a day and a half in length, if travelled

in the *schnell-post*, was more engaging.—First comes the fruit district, which is rich and joyous by reason of its plenty. To this succeeds the country in the Kinsig Thal, which, though not particularly beautiful, has a pastoral character of its own. When the Red Land and the Thuringian Wood are entered, there is some fine forest scenery. About Eisenach the road winds among a succession of hills, clothed with trees, which make a brilliant panorama, when they are seen in their autumnal dress. The towns, too, are most of them worth a day's halt: Fulda, for its ecclesiastical remains; Eisenach, for its clean, picturesque market-place, and its vicinity to the Wartburg—Luther's *Patmos*, where the stains of ink with which the Reformer assaulted The Devil still blot the wall; Gotha, for its Palace; Weimar, for the sake of the brilliant court of intellect and genius which once ruled Germany thence.—At the last I availed myself of an hour's halt on my journey in 1840, to go and stand before the house where Goethe dwelt. The house is but like any other German house, and the fountain before it, a small, paltry fountain—yet both stand out distinct in my memory, from a circumstance, in itself trifling, associated with them. The

Frauen-Platz, a little irregular space, was empty even of loitering children: the noon was warm and sunshiny. In one of the upper windows, from which the poet had looked out, I caught the profile of the colossal helmeted head of the Goddess of Wisdom; in another, half-opened, behind its muslin curtain stood an exquisite nosegay of brilliant autumn flowers. One would not have remarked these things elsewhere; but seen in a Goethe's house they were sufficient to set the fancy in motion.

Where mighty ones have been, O, ne'er erase
One touch, one print, one memory! Ev'n the weed
That clings around the threshold-posts would speed
The enthusiast's rapture, could he only trace
That e'er the Master, lingering by that place,
Vouchsafed its wan and worthless bloom to heed.
And thus 'twas precious, when I stood to read
The words o'er Goethe's door, to meet the face
Of high Minerva smiling gravely bland;
The Goddess there—her priest and follower gone!
And when I marked how some benignant hand
Had gathered flowers, and placed them in the sun,
It pleased my fancy well, that wreath so fair
Should deck the silent shrine whose Angel still is there!

I may be allowed, perhaps, to add an after thought, which arose many years later, within the house of Goethe, on examining his collections,

which are now open to the public. The small value of these to the general connoisseur, struck me forcibly, as a testimony to his power of knowledge and imagination, which could make so much of so little.

These have been treasures to a mighty mind,
Though pale and meagre seems their full display;
On this, the Nature-worshipper would pray,
This, like a spell, the pinions did unbind
On which the pilgrim, ruler of the wind,
Rose toward the fountains of eternal day;
This chanted in his ear some Orphic lay,
From temples where the olden gods were shrined.
Meagre and pale—ah! but to those who look
Through eye without a mind: not such was he,
Nor craved for gilded letters in the book,
Ere he could find therein its poesy.
With royal hand of bounty, large and free,
He gave a talent forth for every grain he took.

When I passed through Weimar in 1840, the town was musically stagnant. M. Chelard was acting *kapellmeister* there; but appeared to be exercising his functions in an atmosphere of discouragement and indifference. This seemed hard and strange to one who had long believed Germany to be a paradise of sympathy and satisfaction to serious musicians. And I had not forgotten that we English owe a particular debt of

gratitude to M. Chelard; since it was by him, in 1832, that we were made acquainted with "Fidelio," and by him, in his capacity of conductor to the German opera, that we were shown what discipline can effect with executive materials in no respect remarkable. The skill and effectiveness, too, of certain portions of M. Chelard's own opera "Macbeth," should save his name from being forgotten, and should have secured him "a fair construction" in his own town.

But the memory of a more renowned artist made Weimar interesting in 1840.—I allude to Hummel, who had been *kapellmeister* at Weimar during the period which makes so brilliant a figure in the annals of Germany. He, too, seems to have been somewhat neglected. Honest, rough, and kind-hearted—in his youth scantily educated and severely coerced—he was totally unable to analyze his art in general, or to maintain his own special part in it, with that minuteness of observation or rhetorical grace of utterance in which the accomplished circle of Weimar connoisseurs loved to indulge. It is even on record, that his compositions merely ranged with himself, as being "difficult," or "not difficult;" and that such a work as his

Sonata in F sharp minor, fine and impassioned as regards idea and the scope given to executive mastery combined—owed its origin to a commission from a publisher for something "extremely hard." Such might be all that Hummel had to communicate on the matter, without his meriting the reproach of "inspired idiocy," or being credited with merely that mechanical readiness which knows not what it is doing. Mozart, it will be recollected, totally and (for him) seriously, declined to criticise himself, and confess his habits of composition. Many men have produced great works of art who have never cultivated æsthetic conversation: nay, more, who have shrunk with a secretly entertained dislike from those indefatigable persons whose fancy it is "to peep and botanize" in every corner of faëry land.—It cannot be said that the analytical spirit of the circle of Weimar, when Goethe was its master-spirit, did any great things for Music. That which was second-rate sometimes found championship there; time was wasted over intellectual exercitation, which would have been more genially devoted to enjoyment and emotion, without tabulating the delight, or anatomizing the pleasure. Not seldom that which was merely

sensual carried off the honours. . For observe what Goethe wrote to Zelter regarding Madame Szymanowska, a Polish *pianiste*, whose name will only live because of Goethe's eulogy. "She may well," says Goethe, "be compared to our Hummel, only that she is a beautiful Polish woman. When Hummel ceases playing, a gnome seems to remain, who, with the existence of mighty demons, produced the wonders for which you scarcely ventured to thank him; but when *she* has finished, and comes and turns her beautiful eyes upon you, you do not know whether you ought not to congratulate yourself upon the change." It is true that Zelter, more directly musical, and less sentimentally under the spell of Madame Szymanowska's eyes than his friend, wrote of Hummel as a pianist something more cordially. "To me," says Zelter, "Hummel is a summary of the pianoforte playing of our time; for he unites, with much meaning and skill, what is genuine and what is new. You are not aware either of fingers or strings: you have *music*. Everything comes out as sure, and with as much ease as possible, however great the difficulty. He is like a vessel of the worst material, full of *Pandora's* treasures."

The above is a solid, if not a very genial, tribute to Hummel the pianist; but I must think, that from philosophers so far-sighted, and from musicians so catholic, he still might have claimed fairer construction and kinder allowance. Though he had not beautiful Polish eyes, he was still a notable composer; though he was "like a vessel of the worst material," he had more than the mere *Pandora's* gift of interpretation: he commanded the individual force, fire —most of all, fancy—of a poet capable of extempore utterance.

By none who have heard Hummel's improvisation can it ever be forgotten. It was graceful, spontaneous, fantastic. The admirable self-control of his style as a player (displayed in a measurement and management of *tempo* unequalled by any contemporary or successor that I have heard), so far from leading him to hamper his fancy or humour, enabled him to give both the fullest scope—inasmuch as he felt sure that he could never ramble away into a chaos, under pretext of a flight across Dream-land. The subjects he originated in improvisation were the freshest, brightest, most various conceivable: his treatment of them could be either strict or

freakish, as the moment pleased;—or he would take the commonest tune, and so grace, and enhance, and alter it, as to present it in the liveliest forms of a new pleasure. I remember once to have heard Hummel thus treat the popular airs in Auber's "Massaniello:"—for an hour and a half, throwing off a Neapolitan *fantasia* with a felicity in which his unimpeachable beauty of tone and execution were animated by the bright spirit of the south, as he wrought together the Chapel Hymn, and the Fisherman's Chorus, and the *Tarantella*, and *Massaniello's* air by the side of the sleeping *Fenella*. It is well known that the gift of musical improvisation can be cultivated, so far as readiness, order, and even climax, are concerned;—that the fancy, too, can be set free by exercise; but it is hard to conceive, that he who was the most various and the most masterly of modern *improvisatori*, should have been a mere machine into which so much learning had been crammed; and thus it is with regret that I have always fancied him undervalued and disparaged among those very persons of taste and philosophy whose boast it was to penetrate through forms and incrustations to the innermost heart of Nature.

Be Hummel's value greater or less, those who recollect the high pretensions made by Goethe's Weimar, will perhaps feel (as I did) pain and surprise on learning, that, during the great old days of that capital, the general treatment of the German musical artist bore no proportion to the encouragement extended to the painter, the poet, or even to the passing English stranger. When Hummel was almost a patriarch in his art, on the evenings of his performance at Court, he was allowed to remain in a mean, comfortless ante-room, till the moment for his *exhibition* arrived: this unworthy usage being broken through by the spirit of a younger artist, who, on being treated in a similar despotic fashion (after receiving a direct and courteous invitation as a private individual, and, what was more, as the household guest of Goethe), walked quietly home out of the *Residenz*, to the great discomfiture of a circle expressly convened to profit by the talent so coarsely and coldly welcomed. This I was told by Mendelssohn, in 1840, as we drove through the gate at Weimar. Long before that time, however, the tone of the town had changed, and the musician was honourably

received at the Court as an honoured guest, among other men of imagination.

The anecdote is curious in another point of view,—as illustrating what has been too little understood in England; namely, the home-position of the great musicians of Germany. Their life of life-appointments has been so often and again represented as the *beau ideal* of artistic desire and opportunity, that when some idea of what now seems to be its true nature began to break upon me, I leaned from conviction, fancying the darkness to be in my own eyes—the canker to lie in my own sophisticated English habits of thinking—and not in a social arrangement, which hardly suits modern times, modern desires, or modern progress.

Let us consider it for a moment.—A man must be of the first strength to resist the influences of a routine existence, passed among those with whom simplicity of habits does not mean an exemption from class-distinctions and class-prejudices, or the discouragement of a censorious and gossiping spirit. While, as the servant of a court,—which is not always composed of such gracious and cultivated personages as a Princess Amelia of Saxony, or the families that now preside over Saxe Weimar,—the Artist must minister to every mode,

no matter how corrupt—to every caprice, no matter how inane—in his closet, the creative thinker is tempted into an opinionated self-contentment from the moment that he knows his fortune to be secure, and his position ascertained, let him please or wrong the public ever so much.—If he be admired, he runs a danger of being puffed up; if he be misunderstood, he is pretty sure to be led into bickerings with his audience, in place of considering how he can conciliate them.

Chance has indulged me with some opportunities of observation; and I can hardly cite one instance of a great creative musician holding a life-appointment in a small town, who has not been either the worse for it, as regards his art, or else who has not enjoyed his competence with such a per-centage of soreness, sense of injustice, and jealousy, as make one sigh for "the dinner of herbs and peace therewith"—for the stroller's cart, or the gipsy's tent—as better than the luxuries of a life passed in an atmosphere of such irritability. There is a more Beotian class of recipients, who, sinking stolidly down into the beer-glass and the tobacco-box, lose whatever brightness or enterprise they were forced to cultivate, so long as they were compelled to

struggle with life; but on persons like these, speculation is thrown away. With them, maturity must imply deterioration, let them get their years over in a crowd or in a wilderness; and the beer and the tobacco are, accordingly, perhaps, the best things which can befall them.

Let it be remembered, that these remarks are not applied to times elder and less civilized than to the thirty recent years of peace, during the earlier portion of which, some of the most promising young composers of Germany got placed — at Hanover, Stuttgart, Munich, Dresden, and elsewhere. I am thinking of what these have done for the world's music. I am counting up more than one glimpse — more than one revelation—more than one unworthy petty newspaper controversy — more than one discreditable instance of ingratitude— more than one melancholy spectacle of worthies in the decline of life, wandering about the world in search of new homes by way of escaping from *tedium vitæ*, neglect, or direct persecution.—For, again, as to position and fortune, a life-appointment by no means offers the final shelter of a faëry land. There may happen such things to the old musician, as the coming of a "new King

who knew not *Joseph*," and who has his own æsthetic notions, his own favourites to provide for—or else his own plan of saving on his chapel that he may spend on his stud. We have seen such humiliating sights as Electors wrangling with men old in years and honours, about a few *thalers* in excess or arrear of their salaries, or about a few days of holiday—as the *kapell-meister* not speaking to the *concert meister* because of some mistake brewed betwixt them by the *theatre-director* in the hopes of exciting His Most Serene Highness the Grand Duke of *Hohen — something or other*, to the dismissal of which ever combatant the *theatre-director* hates. — I do not think that the German habitually dislikes these pleadings and polemics as much as an Englishman does. His life of garden saunterings and coffee-houses, and stout suppers at Mine Host's table, disposes him towards gossip, to a degree which we should consider old-womanish. But, even allowing for this extra toleration, this proclivity towards explanations, intrigues, questions of precedence, and hearkenings out for ill-report, as national—I am satisfied that the general history of modern life-appointments would prove them a failure, both as

regards the developing of a talent which is to speak to all the world, and the securing for those enjoying them an old age unworn by envy, hatred, and other dark solicitudes.

The executive artist, who can go out from time to time, and sun his sympathies in other concert-halls and gardens than those of his own town, may run less danger in one respect—but, on another side, his peril is greater.—That is a cruel time for him, in any event, when the carefully exercised fingers begin to lag and tremble; when the sedulously preserved voice begins to lose tone and compass; when no cosmetics can fill up the caverns on the cheek, or hide the wrinkles on the brow; and doubly cruel it is, if the pleasure-giver sinks into the pensioner who must be endured, and who is exposed to depreciating comparison with every new comer exhibiting a fresher finger-trick,—or whose voice is four-and-twenty instead of four-and-fifty years old. What can be worse than to have nothing left save eagerness to display to a set of neighbours who know the very number of hairs on his head, and to professional rivals who yawn at the very efforts which should move their sympathy? What can be more dispiriting than the sight of

a crew of younger men waiting for his succession?—what more tormenting than supersensitiveness vexed with such suggestions as occurred to the veteran in Browning's "Sordello:"—

> "God help me! for I catch
> My children's greedy sparkling eyes at watch.
> 'He bears that double breastplate on,' they say,
> 'So many minutes less than yesterday.'"

It is a question, whether in any country save England, it is safe for an artist to exercise his art in the place where he has passed his prime.—We have the spirit of loyalty to our public favourites strong within us—too strong, sometimes, to be consistent with a profitable progress in judgment. The gray hairs of those who have grown gray in our service are respected by us—in part from our superior constancy of character—in part from our independence—because they are *not* imposed on us as necessary appendages to Church and State. Such has not been the case in Germany.

LEIPSIC IN 1839-40.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONCERTS.

The Leipsic Fair—The town—The figures of the Fair—Opera at Leipsic—Herr David—A note on musical hospitalities—The concerts at the *Gewand-haus*—The liberality of their *programmes*—The execution—Crowded audiences—Suppers after the concerts.

Be the pilgrim musician or amateur, gentle or simple, humourist or journalist or novelist,—let no one within a hundred miles of the place miss the Leipsic Fair. The town in itself has a quaint, cheerful, and friendly appearance. Within the walls, high richly-decorated houses and old churches seem almost toppling over each other, so thickly are they set. Without, where the ramparts were, is an irregular pleasure-ground, spreading out in some places to such a respectable amplitude as to secure privacy

for the walker. Beyond this belt is another ring, made up of houses, some of them set in gardens, richly dressed and full of flowers; the prettiest, most inviting residences which kind hearts and distinguished musicians could find. There in 1839 and 1840 I found that cheerful, simple, unselfish, and intelligent artistic life which many have been used to imagine as universally German. Leipsic has no court to stiffen its social circles into formality, or to hinder its presiding spirits from taking free way: on the other hand, it possesses a University to stir its intelligences, a press busy and enterprising, and a recurrence of those gatherings which bring a representative of every class of society in Europe together. These last can hardly pass over—be they for mere money-getting, be they for mere merry-making—without disturbing the settlement of that stagnant and pedantic egotism into which the strongest of minds are apt to sink when the wheel of life moves too slowly, or the circle of cares is too narrow.

To be sure, the first moments of my arrival at Leipsic in 1839 were unpropitious enough. I had come from Berlin without stopping. It

was a lowering, showery afternoon; and, finding it impossible to gain any hotel accommodation, I was transferred by the landlord of the *Hôtel de Bavière* to a lodging, four stories high, close in his neighbourhood. The common staircase which led to my nest was dark and ruinous, and of course an inch thick with dirt, since every room in every story of the house was occupied by its own trader or traders. The floor of my chamber, too, when I reached it, was under water; and an old skinny bare-legged *Sycorax* was paddling about in slippers, on pretence of making every thing clean, as she paddled about whooping to an old man as miserable-looking as herself, and, moreover, imbued thoroughly with tobacco. There was no remaining to witness the issue of these operations; so, having deposited my baggage high and dry above the reach of the flood, taking it for granted that somehow or other the place would be made habitable before bed-time (*box*-time one ought to call it in Germany), I strolled out to search for a dinner, and to study the humours of the Fair.

I do not remember to have been ever more thoroughly amused than during that walk. I

was arrested at every step by the high buildings, with wares of every conceivable quality streaming out of every window, from garret to cellar:—food for the mind in books,—pleasure for the eye in prints, Nuremberg toys, and that many-coloured Bohemian glass which makes the booths where it is exhibited glitter like *Aladdin's* palace;—clothing for the body, in the shape of furs, woollen goods, knitted garments of form and use totally unintelligible to English eyes, and magnificent lengths of glaring calico which "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" may accept, if he be willing, for pageant banners when Day begins to close in.—Then the vendors! Here were peasantesses, presiding over their homely wares, in enormous winged caps, with long streamers, or tight forehead-bands of black lace, wearing every variety of tunic, Joseph, petticoat, polonaise, and Hessian boot. There was a man—Heaven knows whence!—from head to heel of the colour of mud, with a huge hat, like an over-ripe mushroom in shape, not half covering his long, unkempt hair,—who stopped and pressed every one to buy his mousetraps, in a deep melancholy voice that at once put to flight all the notions of *brigandage*

and blackguardism which a first glance excited. Close behind, a couple of Jews, in their glossy camlet gaberdines and high-furred caps, made excellent painters' figures: one of the pair with a long yellow beard, so glossy, and crisp, and curling, as to form a wonderful feature in a picture, however ill it assorted with the keen small eyes and the hooked physiognomy belonging to "the tribes;" while the chin of his companion, who was pale as a ghost and spectrally thin, was garnished—it might have been for contrast's sake—with a luxury of black hair. The next trader, perhaps, was a grave and stately Oriental, in his flowing robes and white turban, sitting patiently behind his stall of pipe *waaren*, or gliding up—the most courteous of merchants—with essenced amulets and necklaces of black clay, hanging in cataracts over the edge of his pedlar's box.—Among the people I most liked to meet in the Fair, were the Tyrolese. One establishment or brotherhood of four great brawny audacious men stands before me as I write, with their steeple hats pranked out with nosegays, and their round jackets, their leather girdles, and their velveteen breeches, displaying clean white stockings on

calves huge enough to set up a score of Irish chairmen;—the most impudent, merriest, best-natured disciples of *Autolycus* that ever went forth to bamboozle or amuse the world of *Dorcases* and *Mopsas*. One of them—some six feet high—had a particular propensity to creep into the hotels at high dinner-tide, and to worm himself into the thickest of the crowd, where the prettiest women were to be found; tempting them, like his archetype, to buy "a tawdry lace and a pair of sweet gloves," with impudent flatteries there was no resisting. All the world knows, ever since the days of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, how relishing even a dustman's compliment may be! And my friend admired the small wrists and the white hands to such good purpose, that brisk was the trade he drove, and many the pair of rotten gloves and trumpery bracelets he would get rid of, ere discovery of his presence overtook him, and the eager perspiring crowd of *kellners*, enraged at being interrupted in their service, began to abuse him and to order him out. Not a step would he budge, having taken up a good position. More than once, an absolute chase ensued to clear the room, when the varlet, suddenly diving under one of

the tables, presented his waggish face and his box at the other side, in some corner so inaccessible, with such a pertinacious determination to make good his ground, that resistance was in vain, and he was permitted to finish his traffic in triumph. I ought to be rather ashamed to own the acquaintance; but, after one of these *escapades*, whether he had seen encouragement and diversion in my face I know not, my friend the Tyroler never after met me in the street without choosing to stride along by my side for a considerable distance, laughing and chattering like a magpie, and offering to carry for me whatever I might happen to have in my hand.

Nor were such groups as these the only ones which made the Leipsic Fair so amusing to all who love to study character. The strangers and guests were as miscellaneous as the traders. He must indeed be a lonely man, or have lived all his life in the most tarry-at-home circle of his country, who could escape from picking up there some old acquaintance or some new friend. The number of known and unexpected faces which a pilgrim could meet, to be swept away by the next wave of arrivals, was not the least of the attractions of the place and the time, which made me

feel, ere I had been four-and-twenty hours in Leipsic, as if I had been familiar with it all my life! One day it could be the traveller's lot, perhaps, at table to face a pair of the cold, thoroughly-dressed figures whom he had left doing their part in crowding the London season without animating it;—another, his acquaintance, who sixteen years before came to England to learn the language and mercantile business, will turn up;—another, the discoverer, who, when they parted last, was bound for the Andes or the North Pole;—another, the artist, or *artiste*, whom he had at home admired at a distance in concert-room or theatre. If he was a musician, he was sure of interesting encounters at the Fair of Leipsic; since in that town, when I first knew it, resided the heart of Northern Germany's musical vitality.

The theatre of Leipsic, pleasantly set in a little plantation, is within a small and shabby building. In Burney's time, though its performances were under the direction of M. Hiller, the style of singing was denounced by him as coarse and vulgar, inasmuch as the Italian traditions, which had been introduced early in the century, had been forgotten by the vocalists.

A reason somewhat curious, when it is remembered that the aforesaid Hiller was Mara's master; and that she was confessedly at the head of European *cantatrici* as a vocalist! In 1839 it had not much to boast of, save an excessively fresh and pleasing voice in the person of Mademoiselle Schlegel,* the comeliest of comely *blondes*, some seventeen years of age, who, though already ample in person, had not as yet lost that youthful delicacy of appearance which generally passes away sadly soon from the stage-heroines of Germany. Leipsic in 1839 seemed as entirely devoted to French opera as the other towns I visited. While the thin and wearisome "Caramo" of Lortzing put every one to sleep, as it did me, "Les Huguenots" and "Gustave," performed under every disadvantage of *locale*, drew crowded audiences.

I saw the former; and a more curious performance I never witnessed. Owing to the quantity of supernumerary instruments introduced by Herr Meyerbeer into his score, and the limited scale of the orchestral force, the result at Leipsic was, that the wind-instruments almost outnumbered the violins, to the utter destruction

* Now Madame Köster—1852.

of those proportions upon the observance of which Herr Meyerbeer lays so much stress for the due production of his effects. Nevertheless, the whole work, vast and complicated as it is, went without flaw or faltering; and, harsh as the orchestra was compelled to be (the stringed instruments having no other chance of being heard at all), an outline of the whole opera was traced with a coarse fidelity, if I may so express it, which surprised me, and, by the care and intelligence indicated, gave me pleasure. And when I encountered a Parisian critic—by the very notion of so small a body of singers and instrumentalists attempting works so enormous, thrown into fits of disapproval so violent that he would not vouchsafe to witness murder so flagrant;—willing though I was to concede the utter impropriety of the choice of such an opera, I could not but reply that the manner of its performance implied a perfection of leadership I had never fallen in with elsewhere.

And so it did. I had never met then—I have never met since—with any executive head of an orchestra to compare with Herr David. Spirit, delicacy, and consummate intelligence, and that power of communicating his own zeal

to all going along with him, are combined in him in no ordinary measure, and with the crowning charm of that good-will and sympathy which only await citizens as worthy in head and heart (in the very best sense of the epithet), as he is. A sour, or conceited, or irregularly-living man might, it is possible, know his professional duties equally well; but he would never be followed by his townsfolk with such eager and cheerful zeal, if my faith in the connection of Art and Society be founded upon any reality.

I could say more of Herr David's leading, as a thing in my experience entirely unique. I could dwell, too, upon the pleasant life he was then leading in his garden-house, spent in a constant interchange of good offices, musical and social, with his townsmen and strangers,* unbroken by a shade of envy or irritability, or those other petty feelings of cabal and intrigue

* I have never enjoyed the luxury of instrumental chamber music so richly as at Leipsic. One day it took the form of pianoforte-playing of some new MS. trio, or some Beethoven *sonata*; another evening a quartett; sometimes an *adagio* by Bach; sometimes a *Mazurka* or *impromptu* by Chopin: and all this was lavished with such an apparent ease and conformity to daily habit, as to lessen materially the burden of the obligation which, as an insignificant stranger, I should otherwise have felt. I cannot, however, pass a convocation made by Mendelssohn in

which eat the hearts away of so many artists. But it is a cruel thing to load the true-hearted and highly cultivated with the *plaster* of fulsome laudation; and I might not have printed as much

honour of Herr Moscheles (when the latter was passing through Leipsic in 1840), because in its scale and splendour it approached a public performance, while in its friendliness and ease it retained all the charm of "a little music by one's own fireside." The admirable concert orchestra was collected, and performed two of the "Leonora" overtures of Beethoven, and Mendelssohn's own picturesque overture known in England as "The Isles of Fingal," as well as accompanied the distinguished guest in one of his own *concertos*. Besides this, we had one of Mendelssohn's psalms, admirably sung by the amateurs of the place; the "Hommage à Handel" of Herr Moscheles, played by its composer and Mendelssohn; and one of Sebastian Bach's *concertos* for three pianofortes.

I may here, too, recall one of those thousand instances of gracious and lively kindness, which should be laid together against that future day when the Biography of Mendelssohn shall be written. A smart and unexpected attack of illness pinioned me to the sofa during my second visit to Leipsic. This is not a cheerful sort of imprisonment, when the scene is a very narrow room in a crowded German inn, at fair time—when the time is the black weather, and the short days of November. But the fact of my temporary helplessness had hardly been known a couple of hours, when a heavy sound came up the stairs, and at the door of the little close room. "What is there?" said I. "A great piano," was the answer: "and Dr. Mendelssohn is coming directly." And he *did* come directly, with that bright cordial smile of his. "If you like," said he, "we will make some music here to-day, since you must not go out;" and down

as this, could not all that I have journalised be warranted to the full by the most cynical or pre-occupied stranger, amateur or professional, who in those days ever assisted at one of the Leipsic Concerts.

Exclusive of benefit and charitable concerts, the winter series of these entertainments extends to twenty performances. Nowhere in Germany is the *cramming* system of five consecutive hours of music resorted to; and I have seen our monstrous London *programmes* hoarded up and spelt over like curiosities from Nootka Sound or Ceylon; but still, to provide variety for a score of evenings, in the present dearth of compositions of the highest order, requires no ordinary measure of intellectual energy. Yet this was done at Leipsic, in 1839 and 1840, without parade or without charlatanry. The directors of these concerts, a committee of gentlemen,—

he sat, and began to play through a heap of Schubert's pianoforte music, about which I had expressed some curiosity the day before; for hours delighting himself in delighting an obscure stranger, as zealously and cheerfully as if even then his time could not be measured by gold, and as if his company was not eagerly and importunately sought by "the best of the best," who repaired to Leipsic with little purpose except to solicit his acquaintance.—1852.

among whom are not to be forgotten Herr Rochlitz, the patriarch of German critics, and Dr. Härtel,* whose name is historical among all those caring for continental music,—seconding Dr. Mendelssohn, opened their doors liberally to every new instrumental work of promise; taking good care, however, in cases of experiment, to assure the interest of the evening's performance by the repetition of some favourite and well-known production. In the four concerts which I attended during my two first visits to Leipsic—besides two Symphonies by Beethoven, two Symphonies by Mozart, two Overtures by Weber, and one by Spohr—and *Concertos* for the pianoforte, violin, trombone, and flute—I fell in

* I scarcely need remind the musician that Herren Breitkopf and Härtel were among the earliest, and have been always among the most extensive, publishers of the modern classical music of Germany.—In this respect, too, the amount of life and enterprise at Leipsic is wonderful. The orchestral scores, the oratorios, the operas, the theoretical works, &c., &c., &c., which its four presses pour out, must strike with amazement those who are familiar with the flimsy staple of the wares disseminated by the London publishers. Nor did Herren Breitkopf and Härtel, and Kistner, and Hofmeister, and Peters, content themselves with the coarse paper and coarse type which the German *littérateur* was in those days obliged to be satisfied with from his publishers. I have never seen music so splendidly issued as by the second establishment.

with the whole of one act and the overture of M. Chelard's opera, "Die Hermannschlacht," and a grand manuscript concert *cantata* by Herr Marschner, including an overture, songs, and choruses. Neither M. Chelard's nor Herr Marschner's effort was worth the labour bestowed upon it; but the want in London of such catholicity and enterprise as brought this music forward has gone far, by permitting audiences to remain within one unchanging and narrow circle, to destroy more than one of our musical establishments of high renown.* These very trials and hearings of all that rising contemporary talent can do, instead of seducing the love of an audience from its old objects of reverence, should tend, by contrast, to make what is sterling more sterling, and what

* Among other devices employed for giving interest to the programmes of the Leipsic Concerts, I cannot pass over the performance of Beethoven's four overtures to "Fidelio" on the same evening, to afford the curious means of comparison: or the series of three or more historical concerts, in which the effect meditated by Spohr, in his strangely incoherent symphony, was produced by progressive selections of instrumental music, beginning with Bach and Handel. We are still too far from being ripe for such performances as these—too largely apt to treat all public exhibitions as mere aimless amusements, where the most piquant novelty is the one thing best worth pursuing.

is grand, grander; and to send listeners back to the unfading masterpieces of Music with a sharpened relish.—Never, indeed, did I hear the Symphonies of Beethoven so intensely enjoyed as at Leipsic, and never so admirably performed. As regarded those works of the Shakspeare of Music, I felt, for the first time in my life, in 1839, richly and thoroughly satisfied beyond reserve or question.—There was a breadth and freedom in their outlines, a thorough proportion in all their parts, a poetical development of all their choice and picturesque ideas, which fully compensated for the occasional want of the hyper-brilliancy and the hyper-delicacy, on the possession of which my friends in Paris boast themselves so vain-gloriously. It was not hearing Beethoven played,—it was revelling among his noble creations; and with the most perfect security that nothing would interfere to break the spell, or to call you back from the Master's thought to the medium in which it was given forth. Then those small aggravations of emphasis, those slight retardations of time, neither finically careful, nor fatiguingly numerous,—for which imagination thirsts so eagerly, so rarely to be gratified—were all given; and with such ease

and nature, that I felt the gift was no holiday effort, got up for once, but the staple mode of interpretation and execution belonging to the place. Till, indeed, I heard the Leipsic orchestra,—my first love, the Brunswick Festival, not forgotten,—I felt I had no right to say, "Now I am indeed in the musical Germany of which I have so long dreamed."

As regards *habitat*, the subscription concerts at Leipsic are but indifferently provided. The *Gewand-haus*, a moderately-sized room, was, in 1839-40, infinitely too small for the audience who crowded it, paying their sixteen *groschen* (two shillings) for entrance, with no vainglorious notions of exclusiveness nor tip-toe enthusiasm to trouble their brains, but from a sheer thorough-going love of the art, and a certainty that they should be gratified. The ladies of the place occupied the centre of the room, sitting in two *vis-à-vis* divisions—that is, sideways to the orchestra. Behind them crowded the gentlemen so thickly, that any one going as late as half an hour before the music struck up, run no small chance of being kneaded into the wall by the particularly substantial proportions of those

before him, whom no good-natured wish to accommodate a stranger can make thin. More than once, by the obliging intervention of a friend at court, I was enabled to take refuge within the rails of the orchestra. This was not the best situation in the world for the whole effect, but it enabled me, almost by participation, to appreciate the untiring vigilance and industry of the performers, and the honest goodwill with which they not only betook themselves to their task, but regarded each other. The orchestra consists of some sixty or seventy performers; precisely the number, so Beethoven's biographers tell us, which the great master conceived to be the best suited to the adequate performance of his Symphonies. The vocal music of these concerts is generally mainly sustained by the presence of some one stranger engaged for the series, and such resident talent as the town affords. In two successive years, two of our countrywomen, Miss Novello and Mrs. A. Shaw, filled the former position with brilliant credit. In 1839, the young Belgian lady, Mademoiselle Meerti (who has since done her part in London in establishing the

claims of her country as one rich in musicians) was the favourite of Leipsic. In 1840, things were less auspiciously ordered; a Mademoiselle Schloss, who had received much training as the resident lady, triumphantly maintaining her ground against Mademoiselle Meerti's successor. The latter, Mademoiselle List, stood upon the ground of her beauty. As regards her singing, I cannot conceive how t could ever have been brought to an end with any orchestra less admirably under conduct; and, after counting five notes in one bar and nine in another, in the vain hope of ascertaining what was the real *tempo* of the movement in which she was engaged, I went home penetrated with admiration at the courtesy of my Leipsic friends in playing out of time when "a lady was in the case."

Very pleasant were those concerts, and very pleasant — though any thing but English — the suppers which sometimes succeeded them, — when parties of nine or a dozen ladies and gentlemen would repair to one of the hotels, to do justice to the good things of its *speise-karte;* and the animated scene of the

dinner was more gaily repeated, from the ladies being in evening-dress. To be sure, I could not help lamenting over the fresh and pretty toilettes that must have gone home, in some cases, saturated with tobacco-smoke; and it was sometimes difficult to hear a word that passed in the midst of the noise of the service of the table—the explosion of champagne corks—and the diapason of a violent and busy band of music, playing Strauss, and Bellini, and Auber with an untiring industry hard to sympathize with when the ears are full with Beethoven and Mozart. Such a Babel of mirth and good-fellowship, such a mingling of many odours, I never encountered elsewhere. I cannot wish that such a Leipsic fashion should be brought home to us, with the Leipsic style and conception of what orchestral music means. But there it was natural, and hearty, and pleasant. Jean Paul speaks of "a crumpled soul:" a better scene for the straightening of the same could not be devised than those merry and obstreperous *finales*, especially if the favour of the misanthropist is to be propitiated by a dish of larks. Those delicate birds are nowhere

to be found in such perfection as upon a Leipsic supper table; and Music, as all the world knows, is a most potent sharpener of the appetite!

CHAPTER II.

TRACES OF BACH.

The chorus of the concerts—The *Thomas-Schule*—The *Thomas-Kirche*—The interior reminding me of "Quintus Fixlein"—A mass in a Lutheran church—The manner of execution—The old days of the *Thomas-Schule*—Music and learning—George Rhau—The Reformation—Luther a promoter of music, though an iconoclast—Slight remembrances of Kühnau and Bach—Music "of all time."—Permanence a characteristic of Bach's style—Bach still the teacher in Leipsic—Style of music and performance most relished in Leipsic—Madame Schumann, with a note on Herr Schumann as a composer—Leipsic taste accused by a visitor of a leaning towards the *perruque*.—*Postscript*, 1852—Some attempt to compare Bach and Handel.

In describing the admirable features of the Leipsic Concerts, I must not forget the chorus. This, indeed, tells as significant a story to the speculative traveller as the Caryatides of the old Berlin Opera House.

On my first visit to the *Gewand-haus*, being

admitted to a rehearsal, I was struck by the sight of half a dozen eager-looking intelligent lads, listening to every note of the orchestra with true German enthusiasm. At the concert, again, in the evening, when compelled, as I have said, to take shelter from the crowd behind the violins and double-basses, I was nearly thrust upon the demolition of a drum by the same troop. These were the boys of the *Thomas-Schule*, who are there educated to take part in all the religious musical services of the town, and who afford, too, their assistance to its secular entertainments; having the privilege, in return, of being present on all occasions when public music is going on. I was sorry to hear (the case demands the reproof of commemoration) that the only instance of this privilege being denied was at the benefit concert of a young English songstress, who had made her foreign reputation by a winter's appearances at the Leipsic Concerts.

Hard by one of the outlets of the old town, —where, but for the restraining girdle of walls, the mass of tall and crowded buildings seems as if it must *pour itself over* upon the gardens, —stands a large irregular mass of gray stone,

the principal member of which, with its high sloping roof, assists picturesquely to break the town "prospect," on which ever side it is contemplated. Close beneath it, the traveller is shown a couple of windows in the gray wall which have an ancient but not a dreary aspect, overlooking as they do a cluster of flowering shrubs. The windows belong to the house of Sebastian Bach, who was for many years *Cantor* of the *Thomas-Schule*. All who have enterprise enough in the cause of good music to rise and fare forth at eight on the Sunday morning may hear the choristers of the still flourishing establishment sing in the church *their* musical services, before the prayers and the preaching commence.

The *Thomas-Kirche*, like most other of the German churches I know, is, internally, a lofty as well as a spacious building; and, though it be no less closely shorn of the *insignia* of Popery, it is infinitely less naked and bleak-looking than the Cathedral at Brunswick. The white walls, on which the stucco has been capriciously destroyed, are hung with galleries and pews like bird-cages, irregularly disposed,—some glazed, others open; a few decorated with escutcheons,

a few with carving and gilding. It would be difficult, I suspect, to explain why the sight of the interior of the church, at that early hour, and of the not very numerous congregation, recalled to me Jean Paul's "Quintus Fixlein," and his other homely pictures of German life, which Mr. Carlyle, and less gifted scholars, have given to the English. But so it was: and as I sat on one of the hard benches in the aisle, waiting for a few minutes till the exercise should begin, I seemed to take a closer glance at the devout and primitive life of the country than had yet been afforded to me; and I felt startled when the first bars, played by a well-selected orchestra led by Herr David, introduced me at once to the sweet and holy "Kyrie" of Beethoven's mass in C major. Somehow or other, the pair of papistical candles on the altar did not shock my Lutheran English eyes so much as the sound of music, with which the genuflexion of priests and the diffusion of incense is associated, startled my ear.

The boys sang remarkably well; and the music requires no common skill and certainty. There is a chromatic modulation in the "Qui

tollis," very difficult to execute in tune, at which I have heard some of our most redoubtable artists hesitate; but it went over so smoothly, and without force, that I scarcely knew when it had passed. The boy, too, to whom was allotted the principal *solo* (according to the ordinance bequeathed to us from olden times, which denies Woman a voice in prayer and praise no less than in state affairs), had tones less freshly crude, and thus more welcome to the ear, than those of any urchin I have ever heard. He was a clever musician, too, as I had often occasion to notice at concert rehearsals; with an arch, audacious eye, and that ready vivacity of look and gesture which seemed to promise the stage an excellent singer on some future day.

It was more than musically interesting thus to stumble upon a relic of the old church foundations, amongst which all Art received its first cultivation and encouragement; and to find one of those very establishments which, by its Mysteries and Moralities enacted on high festival days, afforded to all Christendom the earliest ideas of operatic representation, still remaining, little impaired by change and revolution,

to lend support and encouragement to secular Music.

So long ago as the year 1213, a society of Augustine monks, among other principal objects of education for the good citizens of Leipsic in their monastic school, established also an institution for the training of a band, whose chief duties should be the musical services of the church; duties not held inconsistent with philosophical studies or classical attainments. And hence, from the earliest foundation of the *Thomas-Schule* of Leipsic, the *Cantores* (masters of singing) seem to have been equally distinguished, equally reverenced, with the other teachers of learning and science at this school. In the annals of the establishment, the names of those who taught "plain song" keep loving companionship with those who expounded the dead languages or the secrets of Philosophy. Passing many worthy names, it was only twenty years before the Reformation came, to load all that was of monkish origin with opprobrium, that we find in the records of the *Thomas-Schule* the name of a *Cantor* dwelt upon with particular emphasis. This was George Rhau, the friend of Melancthon and Luther; who, among other composi-

tions, wrote a "Veni sancte Spiritus," which, on the occasion of the opening speech of a Leipsic disputation by Mosellanus, the *Baccalaureus*, he caused his scholars unexpectedly to strike up. Its effect was so solemn and overcoming, that the hearers fell upon their knees with one accord.

When the Reformation came, the *Thomas-Schule* was, of course, remodelled; but, though its Papistical colour was effaced, this did not imply the severance of Music from the severer branches of learning. The idolatries of the Mass were to be abolished; but, to deprive worship of one of its most natural utterances, which the priests and Levites in the Jewish Temple, and the disciples in the Christian Gethsemane, had alike employed, never entered into the brain of the Master-reformer—himself a musician by nature and by cultivation. Everywhere, on the contrary, did Luther inculcate the importance of the honest study, as well as of the chaste and dignified employment of the art. There are few German melodies of the epoch which have kept their place beside the tunes of his *Choral-Buch*. And the tendency of his mighty Reformation, though it was doubtless

destructive to the imitative arts, inasmuch as it struck at the root of that hero-worship which was the originating principle of Painting and Sculpture, so far from bringing degradation to the musician, tended rather to exalt him to a companionship with the highest and most learned teachers of mankind. Thus the *Cantor* of the *Thomas-Schule* fared no worse under the new than under the old dispensation.* The honourable nature of his civic position, under a stricter rule, could not fail to incite him to a wide and noble course of action; and accordingly we find that, after many less eminent worthies, the predecessor of Bach—Kühnau—was elected organist of the *Thomas-Kirche* at the early age of seventeen years; the election being a conse-

* In the autumn of 1840, the number of scholars on the foundation was fifty-eight. The qualifications for admission are—good morals, capacity for learning, and some natural musical aptitude; and the course of instruction is ample, and in concord with the original purposes of the school, that Music should neither be neglected for graver studies, nor deemed unworthy to bear them company. The *Thomas-Schule* has turned out many accomplished musicians—Herr Reissiger, the well-known composer and director of the Dresden Opera, among the number—and was described to me as one of the two most important establishments in North Germany—the other being the *Kreutz-Schule* of Dresden.

quence of the great sensation excited by the performance, at the Leipsic Fair, of one of the stripling's compositions by the students of the University. On his election he availed himself of every opportunity to prosecute the studies of jurisprudence, the mathematical sciences, and the Greek language; and, besides composing and writing many treatises on Music, he was a good Italian and French scholar, and translated several works from those languages. At the age of thirty-three he was elected to the directorship of the music of the Leipsic University, holding this conjointly with the cantorship or musical superintendence of the *Thomas-Schule*.

Of Kühnau's more eminent successor it is alike hard to speak or to be silent: difficult to praise him well—impossible to forget him. He was with me everywhere in North Germany. I thought of him in the clean old-world market-place of the town of his birth, Eisenach; with its church among the linden-trees, and its quaint fountain in the centre of the square; and its flying dolphins and dragons, which lean out from the high battlements of the houses, giving to that work-a-day thing, a spout, an air as quaintly graceful as Elizabethan fantasy gave in England

to that ugly smoke-conduit, a chimney. I thought of his homely, affectionate, conscientious ancestors, by religious persecution driven from their native Hungary to take refuge in the Red Land of Thuringia;*—of their well known meetings, when, on anniversaries and holidays, the dispersed branches of the family used to assemble to make merry and sing edifying or jovial strains; and of the other recorded traits of their simple and loving affection which indicate warm hearts as well as plain lives and strong bodies. I thought of the early difficulties with which little Sebastian had to struggle; not, indeed, great or terrible, as compared with the ogres and giants which other musicians had slain,—but sufficient to prove his nerve and perseverance and resolution to become of weight and worship in his art:—how he sat up on moonlight nights, for want of candle, to copy the whole book of instrumental studies, the loan of which was refused to him by his brother—the one churlish Bach;—how he walked on foot from Arnstadt to Lubeck to hear Dietrich Buxtehude play, like any other stout craftsman, after the fashion of his country, fighting his way

* See Forkel, and the other biographers of Sebastian Bach.

through Germany to perfect himself in his calling; and how, without revealing himself, he studied, for some months, the master's style in secret. I thought of the many tales of the patience, and modesty, and good citizenship which distinguished his manhood and old age; —how much self-respect withal he never failed to show when the dignity of his art, or his own acquirements, were in question. And could all these things be forgotten under the very windows of the house—in that very church—where, for twenty years, he had planned and executed that magnificent series of works, which were never young and never will be old?

That those, indeed, who never looked young never will look old, is an aphorism applicable in Art as well as in physiognomy. Bach was one of these. I can never hear one of his sublime combinations, be it on the smallest scale, without the petty subdivisions of cycle and epoch fading utterly away, — without feeling myself more completely at the feet of a teacher than before any other musician. In them Imagination is chastened, not denied play; — the executive power of human ingenuity called forth to the utmost, yet without the possibility of the ear for

an instant mistaking the means for the end,—that which is outward and transient for that which is inward and perennial. School after school has passed away, form after form been exploded,—and now, when so much has been tried and judged and forgotten, the young musicians of Europe are falling upon the works of Bach as upon a mine of virgin treasure. Thus, we have seen a revival of the love for our Elizabethan drama after its having for awhile passed out of sight—though never into that utter oblivion from which there is no hope of recall or of return to the light of human sympathy.

If, while I was in Leipsic in 1839, I was disposed to rhapsodise about Bach—that least rhapsodical of all composers—it was because every hour's experience confirmed my first impressions that his traditions still leavened the musical taste of the town. The cordial understanding with which all the measures of that most accomplished and liberal of music-directors, Dr. Mendelssohn, were met may have been in part effected by his being steeped in the knowledge and love of the Master of Leipsic.—It was there, at all events, that I first began seriously to believe that, even in one and the same country, style in art might

be found as delicately various as the diversities in the flower for the moment most in request amongst florists. I had long fancied that I could distinguish a Dublin singer by his disposition to drag the *tempo* of his music (in which he shares the idiosyncrasy of the Belgians). I had learned, again, how far a peculiar dialect influences vocal tone, by some acquaintance with our own Lancashire, Norfolk, and Middlesex chorus-singers. But it was only when some comparison of the *manners* of Berlin, Leipsic, and Dresden was forced upon me within a short space of time that I could recognise shades of humour* and tendency as delicate yet as constant in their recurrence as the cut of a leaf or the shape of a blotch of colour (to ramble back to my garden-metaphor).

At Leipsic I found that the merits most cordially admired in instrumental composition and performance were a sober breadth of *reading*—grandeur without ponderosity—expression with-

* I may add that "the Vienna pianoforte-players" have passed into a proverb, as illustrating brilliant and florid style on that instrument. In Dr. Burney's tour, a similar apportionment is also made; Vienna being, according to him, "the most remarkable for fire and invention, Manheim for neat and brilliant execution, Berlin for counterpoint, and Brunswick for taste."

out caricature—light and shade without needless flourish. Whether I was listening to the concert orchestra, or to the pianoforte-playing of Mendelssohn, or to the *organ-playing* on the piano of Madame Schumann (best known in England by her maiden-name of Clara Wieck) who commands her instrument with the enthusiasm of a Sybil, and the grasp of a man,—or to the incomparable leading or quartett playing of my friend Herr David,—the same characteristic preferences forced themselves on my notice, to the satisfaction of the heart and mind, if not always of the imagination. A Leipsic audience seemed to me difficult, and perhaps over-exquisite, in its likings and dislikings, but not captious without the power of giving a reason. Among Beethoven's Symphonies, for instance, his "Pastorale" was the least in favour, and the worst played: the taste of the town then not tending towards musical punning, or (to speak more reverently) to such literal imitation as calls up rivulets, birds, and thunder-storms, even when it is wielded by a Beethoven. Among Moscheles' pianoforte music, his fine broad duett, the "Hommage à Handel" was a never-tiring favourite. In spite of the residence there of Herr

Schumann, whose "Kreissleriana,"* and other pianoforte compositions, are in the very wildest strain of extravagant mysticism, a regular *Concerto* was, in Mendelssohn's day, better relished

* The very title of these compositions, by recalling to the German student one of Hoffmann's most fantastic creations, will acquaint him with their eccentricity and singularity, and their design of not displaying any settled effect. To those who know not Hoffmann's writings in the original or translation I almost despair of unriddling the word in question. Band-master *Kreissler*, of whom a sort of Shandean use is made by that strange humourist, is an eccentric musical enthusiast; hence the fragments bearing his name (and bearing out his character) are as near regular and symmetrical musical compositions as Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is to a complete epic.—It was said, in 1839-40, that Herr Schumann had declared his resolution of writing a work which should outdo Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Since that time, he has produced largely: and admirers have gathered round him asserting that he has entirely fulfilled the above tolerably ambitious resolution. It appears as if the usual order of affairs had been followed in his case; as if extravagant mysticism, assumed to conceal meagreness of idea, had given way (as the composer grew older and more impatient to secure popularity) to a dullness and heaviness of common-place, little more acceptable, not in the least more beautiful, and certainly less amusing. Opera, *Cantata*, Symphony, Quartett, *Sonata*—all and each tell the same story, and display the same characteristics—the same skill of covering pages with thoughts little worth noting, and of hiding an intrinsic poverty of invention, by grim or monotonous eccentricity. There is a style, it is true, in Dr. Schumann's music—a certain thickness, freaked with frivolity—a mastery which produces no effect—a resolution to deceive the ear, which (as in the case of certain French composers) ends in habituating the

at Leipsic than the most airy and delicate piece of fantasy of the newer schools. "*C'est un peu perruque ici!*" said —— to me one day; a little chagrined, I suspect, on my smiling at his enthusiastic arrogation to Paris of all the musical excellence now remaining in the world. "Perhaps," replied I, "you would call bread, or wine, or any thing else that nourishes without unhealthy stimulus, *perruque*, also?—or think, with the lady in the comedy, that spasms and fits of epilepsy are but an extravagance of health?" "Bah!" was the answer, as he turned upon his heel on his road to *L'Académie* and the *Conservatoire* of the French metropolis.

Postscript, 1852.—During the ten years which have elapsed, since the foregoing sketch was taken, there have been many changes in Leipsic: musically, none for the better, with the ex-

ear to the language of deception; and spoils the taste without substituting any new sensations of pleasure.—Up to the present period Dr. Schumann's music may be said to be submitted to rather than generally accepted in Germany. A general acceptance, I must think, would imply a decadence of taste even more rapid than that which has taken place since the above sketches were made.—1852.

ception of the removal thither of Herr Moscheles, and the accession of so thoroughly and intellectual a professor to the School of Music there. The master influence of the place is gone! Thus, there is something to add to—or rather to take away from—the above character of Leipsic. Of the town itself, and its part in German music, on and since the death of Mendelssohn, a word will be offered in another page. The matter in hand is less narrative—less certain—though it will seem to many, more dogmatic—being simply some attempt to profit by ten years of light and knowledge in appreciating the peculiar genius and services to art of the great Leipsic composer, Sebastian Bach.

This is no easy subject for one who is avowedly unscientific to treat: yet, perhaps, the scientific are hardly in the best case to state the result of impressions, and to perceive the causes and effects of special historical facts. In music, they naturally enough (and wholesomely for Art) mistrust all that is comprehended in the word "*effect*." The master will, by them, be ranged the highest who has thought the deepest, who has looked the furthest, who has known the most. This *dictum*, perhaps, the amateur

may be permitted to amend, by adding, "*and who has spoken the clearest.*"

It is too much forgotten that Music is a twofold art—an art of utterance no less than of meditation—an art, the inventions of which fail unless they captivate. Bach is eminently the composer who *convinces* — the composer whose appeal is stronger to the intellect than to the sympathies—the *Ben Jonson* of musicians, shall I say?—to *Shakspeare* Handel. Shall I venture further, and ascribe the form which the inspirations of these two giants took to circumstance, yet more than to individual temperament?—Perhaps something like a principle of Art may indicate itself in the comparison.

The respective strength of Bach and Handel will be in some degree apportioned, if we consider the historical origin of their great works, and the nature of the same. The Patriarch Bach — for a patriarch he may indeed be called, with his twenty children— appears to have been a grave, robust, serene man; not coveting either publicity or lucre; contented within his own sphere, which, though not precisely limited in its influences, was secure from much vicissitude or collision, or close

and immediate dependence on his public. In his simple and old-fashioned German life of labour and even fortunes, there is something cordially engaging, which, to persons of a reserved or fastidious temper, will appear the *beau ideal* of artistic existence and occupation. Others endowed with more elastic spirits and more sanguine temperament, or who fancy that they have views of life rather higher than those involving the greatest attainable happiness, may question the discretion or the duty of seclusion to the artist. And if their question be waived aside as so much high-flown nonsense—or as a covert plea for the artist's careless, sensual existence—they may go a step further, and declare that the highest works (I speak here only of Music) have NOT been the offspring of serene and self-centred meditation, but have been conceived in haste, born in pain, and modified in a thousand ways by circumstance and concession. It will be seen, I apprehend, that in that special exercise of his skill and invention, where Bach was liable to rivalry, comparison, public criticism (I allude to his organ compositions), he did rise to that freedom and sublimity, he did condescend to that practicability and adaptability which cha-

racterize all the master-pieces of Music. In a less degree, perhaps, but still sufficiently and significantly enough—the same supremacy attends him among the writers of his time as a composer for other keyed instruments. In his treatment of the orchestra (so far as I know it), Bach appears to me conjectural rather than experienced: to have hankered after experiment, and to have toyed with every new discovery without possibly having enjoyed many opportunities of testing the chances of permanence for his new combinations. His scores are full of curiosities of instrumentation, to introduce executive powers which no longer exist.—It is a mistake to conceive that the old orchestras had no variety; they were, on the contrary, filled with conceits and varieties, each one differing from its neighbour. The array of forgotten instruments produced in the year 1845 at our *Ancient Concerts*, may be cited in support of my assertion. Besides the *violino Francese*, *viola d'amore*, *viola de braccio*, *due viola de gamba* (precursors of the stringed quartett) and *chitarra*, were *teorbo*, lute, and *violone*. In the year 1716, when Quantz arrived at Dresden, Dr. Burney tells us, that the orchestra collected by Augustus,

Elector of Saxony, included not only "hautbois," German flute, bassoon, French horn, but also "*pantaleone*" and lute. For orchestras thus fantastically amplified, it may have been Sebastian Bach's pleasure to compose. The trumpet parts in his scores, again,—which now no Harper, Distin, or Arban, can manage, distancing every thing that the author of "Joshua" and "the Messiah" wrote for "the famous Mr. Snow," may be susceptible of this reason in interpretation of their present impossibility. Few or no such delicacies were at the command of Handel in England, and thus he was compelled to write less intricately and more universally.

But, granting to Bach a fertility of fancy and a variety of science in his instrumental works, at least as remarkable as that displayed under our more romantic modern dispensation by any composer,—I cannot conceive (to pursue the subject a step further) that the finest organ fugue in being, or the most curious triple *concerto*, can, in any view, rank with such colossal and beautiful poems as the "Messiah," "Israel," "Judas," "Acis," and "Alexander's Feast," of Handel. To the height of none of these does Bach's

sacred music rise. Granted its grandeur, and the amazing power displayed in its construction, the consciousness of the latter rarely leaves the listener. He is rarely sufficiently rid of the conviction of the composer's ingenuity and skill in overcoming difficulties to be at ease, and to take home the whole with that singleness of heart which is subdued and laid under tribute by the greatest greatness. If it be said that this impression of divided attention, if not discomfort, is merely one of circumstance, owing to the unfamiliarity of performance of Bach's vocal music, such explanation illustrates rather than cancels the objection. To execute it aright, the science of every singer must be kept in a state of the utmost tension. Had the composer held more frequent commerce with great singers, — and not with singing scholars, in some sort machines to be trained and tortured at will—he must have felt that, in every case where the notion of skill must be always kept uppermost with the executant, the soul of the work runs great risk of being unexpressed, and that, thus far, the thing produced is defective. Such is not the case with the "Hallelujah" in the "Messiah," or with the "Hailstone Chorus,"

or with the chorus, "But the waters overwhelmed their enemies," in "Israel;" or with "Wretched Lovers," in "Acis and Galatea."

Now, let us recollect how, why, and when Handel's masterpieces were written. The story is full of instruction. They were composed under no patent of privacy—hardly even of patronage; for Handel's royal patrons in England were not "the fashion," and availed little, so far as history can be trusted, in shielding him from ill fortune. They were undertaken when the old opera-composer, buffeted and beaten by years of contest with fools of quality, and with exacting singers in the Italian Opera House of London, was at last virtually excluded thence—discarded as worn out—as one who had said all he had to say, and who, having pleased "the town" as much as "the town" wanted, must, therefore, of necessity, be thrust aside and laid on the shelf, in favour of the newest importation from Italy. Such had been Handel's past—such was his plight—when, not utterly to justify the malignants by retiring a broken and ruined man, he set himself to consider how he could still keep his ground in London!—To myself,

there is something at once noble and affecting in this vigour and vivacity of spirit, maintained in the face of so much ill fortune and caprice; and much as I love to think of the homely, brave old German musicians living (with their pipes) in their pleasant garden-houses—holding forth concerning "their mystery" to devout congregations, with an honest tediousness, and working their best, in self-assertion and self-appreciation—I am made prouder for the poet, prouder for the artist, prouder for "the immortal part" which exists in every genius, let his form be ever so human, when I recollect that they can be bright, energetic, and glorious enough—as they were in Handel's case—to defy time, and to conquer caprice, and to turn circumstance to account; and still to produce those imperishable creations, the value and the beauty of which are never-ceasing.—In the popularity of the two men, may, for once, be found the measure of their greatness: in this, too, bearing out my parallel betwixt their respective works, and "The Alchymist," as compared with "Lear," or "Othello."—The one is full of matter for study, not excluding delight; the other is full of matter for delight,

not excluding study.—In the one, the head predominates over the heart and fancy; in the other, heart and fancy dominate, not predominate, over head. We grow into love with Bach as a curious and recondite author, who is also manly, noble, intelligent, and abundant in thought; but we begin in love with Handel, and, as we go on, our love expands in our appreciation of his richness, variety, simplicity, and the colossal sublimity of result—which no familiarity can render tiresome, which no comparison can make less, which no novelty can cast into shade.

CHAPTER III.

MUSICAL JOURNALISM.

Musical publication—Confession not prohibition—The journalist a new influence in Music—Difficulty of finding competent critics—The false position of the Artist with respect to the Critic especially false in Germany—*Small town* life—Damage done to art, creative and executive, and to taste.

WHEN Leipsic music and the Leipsic Fair are the topic, the mind of every one in the least conversant with the Art, will naturally turn in the direction of musical publication, recollecting how long that spirited and friendly town has been one of the main centres to which the poet has looked for the means of diffusing his works, and the knowledge of his works, hither and thither.

But if I advert to the Leipsic utterances of and concerning Music in paper and ink, it is not

again to dwell on the gorgeous, liberal, cheap, and correct works poured out in remarkable profusion by the Leipsic publishers, but rather to dwell on another relation of the press with Music; even though it may be thought by many persons, one on which it is indecorous for me to dwell at all. Having myself attempted journalism with reference to Music, it may be held that I have no right to speak of the secrets of the printing-office in other lands; that I am betraying trust, faithless to my own guild, and disloyal in return for courtesy.

With this canon I can but in part agree. While few can regard personality in any form, as a more unbeseeming misuse of experience and confidence than myself, no one writing on Art must avoid (in dread of being misconstrued) from dealing with any important estate that at once influences its well-being, and reflects its quality. What is more, few so thoroughly as one who has some practical knowledge of journalism, can appreciate its privileges and its temptations. I should conceive it to be a coarse impertinence were I to attempt to record the good and bad fortunes of the classical and romantic musical journals of Leipsic,—to discuss

the knowledge, the style, and the success of any one among the confraternity of writers, great or small. I am not going to spoil private courtesies by proclaiming them, nor to rake up petty scandals, under pretext of illustration; nor to approach vexed questions with the hasty arrogance of a passing tourist; but, as a man of the press, I may speak earnestly and generally on the manner in which its nature and functions are misunderstood, rendered difficult of exercise, and deprived of much value, owing to too high a fear of it, and too low a self-respect on the part of the artist.

As far as concerns Music, the press, as a patron or a punisher, is, comparatively, a new power. In the time of Mozart, the artist had to manœuvre for presents, for court-appointments: here, to win a favourable word from a Prince; there, to wait a day in some great man's ante-chamber. Every publisher was then little better than a pirate; every pupil might then cross into another state with a surreptitious copy of a score, and neither check nor redress existed. Some of these abuses still cling to the musician's career in Germany (if not elsewhere too), but he has now a means of appeal—of making himself

known — in theory far more congenial to the independent artist than any courtiership to Electors, or to Gold Sticks in waiting. The Critic has largely replaced the Patron. — But the demand for what is to pass as criticism, has grown faster than the supply. The persons who can addict themselves to the literature of Art—still more those who will occupy themselves in its most fragmentary and exhausting tasks as a pleasure, a pursuit, and a duty,—are, of necessity, few in every country. If artistic criticism be embraced as a trade, it is of all trades the poorest: an ill-remunerated labour, carried on in the midst of a life of apparent show and dissipation. There is every temptation, in the journalist's own position, for him to tamper with his responsibilities "for a consideration;" and if he receives warning against dishonour (hardly understood as such) or encouragement to hold evenly on his way, year by year adding to his knowledge, it is rarely that either reaches him from the artist. For how curiously has the position of the Critic been misunderstood by the musician!—How has the latter, by crouchings or by threats, permitted or defied the former to assume an absurd

predominance, and encouraged the writer to play the part of master over the artist, of avenger against enemy, whereas he is simply the servant of the public!—And observe the result: the incompetent, the immoral, and the impudent, having no principles of judgment, no code of truth or falsehood to restrain them, being tempted to be unjust and exacting, open themselves to all manner of persuasions, direct and indirect; and here by suppression, there by exaggeration, make, as the French phrase runs, fair and foul weather — the artist himself conniving at the quackery by which the public is to be abused, and the art vitiated.—For it is not only the mediocrities with whom the journalist's is a name of fear. The highest and the finest spirits—the most cultivated, the most truthful, the most famous of their order—may be found uneasy in the presence of the meanest practitioner with pen and ink, till his favour has been propitiated, and his friendship made.—This is no fancy-picture—no exception described by way of rule. Those who resist such weakness, by word, look, and sign, are the very few; and, alas! for poetical justice, they suffer accordingly.

It does not seem to me that this canker eats

into the musical world so deeply anywhere as in Germany: that the artists of any other country are so directly and obsequiously solicitous for the support, or to speak more explicitly, for the commendation of the newspapers, as the German artists are. Their behaviour in London and Paris must not altogether be explained away, on their cherishing an ill-based awe of the intellectual sophistication and profligacy of those capitals—to the bad habits of which, while endeavouring to conform, they conform immoderately. At home, in their village-towns, in their garden-houses, in their pleasant suburban walks,—in their coffee and beer-drinking moments of idling sociability, when men most desire friendly company around them,—I have seen great artists intruded, traded, and sponged upon by those whom no considerations short of a cowardly expediency could have induced them to tolerate. No wonder, therefore, that the meaner sort of musicians—such being the home-habit of some among the mightier—will leave no stone unturned, no access unattempted, no means untried, when, on arriving in foreign *El Dorados*, they are seized with an uneasy consciousness that their attractions may be fewer than the public of *El Dorado* is ac-

customed to demand and to requite. For some among the mediocre, this system of courted influence, and unmerited praise, works profitably at home and abroad; but for many a rising genius, better in acquirements, better in delicacy, better in conscience—it doubles every struggle —it embitters every trial—it protracts every expectation. Such men ought to be protected by their greater brethren who have climbed the hill, won the spurs, been invested with the robe and the crown; and such can only be aided, inasmuch as the Critic is kept in his right place, which is that of sworn truth-teller, not suborned witness. This, the public, ignorant of facts, can hardly effect; but this the masters of Art should accomplish, by a simpler and more even intercourse with the competent and the upright, and by a settled and steady avoidance of the ignorant and the false.—They have in Germany to fight against the pleasures and the foibles of what may be called *small town* life—to be there, more than elsewhere, on their guard against petty gossip, petty jealousy—the weariness that comes of over-intimacy, the recoil of an enthusiasm which has made the most—not the least—of its professions. It should be there, therefore,

more than anywhere else, recollected that a feather in a man's hand does not give him wings to his shoulders, and convert him into a chartered angel; whose name must be spoken with dread so soon as ever his praise or blame appear in the journal:—that a desire to merit honest and well-reasoned praise does not mean, that melancholy antechamber-work of prostration and propitiation to the coarse and the venal, which some had hoped died with the death of the old-world aristocratic patronage. It should be recollected that those whom artists really trust and esteem do not require such humbling civilities: that the Critic moves the most freely, lives the most happily, and performs his task the most uprightly, when the privacy of his reserve is respected, and when no man approaches him to insinuate into his mouth his own hopes and fears—his own words or thoughts—concerning himself and his works. Beyond this, by the slightest interference, do artists trammel and vitiate that private discussion and interchange of opinion, which might on both sides be so valuable and interesting. Not only do they waste their own time and energy—not only do they wear out and drag down such poetry as may have been given

to them,—but they set an example deadly to the honesty of the less successful—and which may be fatal to the conscientious, in shutting them out of opportunity, because they will not fawn, and press, and solicit, as the habitual conditions of intercourse demand! The heart-ache, which their own unworthy timidity has to answer for, is such as no generous man would love to bear upon his conscience.—Again, the popular idea that the least dispraise is to be considered as malevolence, and actively to be silenced, virtually renders it impossible for artists to serve Art, as they might do most importantly, by themselves ever and anon lending a hand to the diffusion of knowledge and the culture of taste, in criticizing great new musical works, the styles and fashions of the hour, the artists that interpret, and the public that is to be gratified. Inasmuch as breach of confidence is abominable, and as that which is said in private should be kept for private use (save in very rare cases), a fearless and chivalrous intercourse in public is good for art; but, as matters stand, this is next to impossible to every musician, who will be neither parasite nor partisan.

All the evils of this perversely ill-understood relation are developed by the very life which seems so delightful in Germany—of small circles and small towns, and perpetual intercourse as distinct from real friendship.—I have spoken freely of the difficulties I found in Berlin, from the critical habits of the place; but I may add, that no where have I partaken of a great musical pleasure in Germany without being cognizant of sunken rocks close to the surface of the water. From his own personal ease or distress, no man can generalize;—it is the words dropped in dark corners, by those with whom one has slight acquaintance; it is the tedious guest welcomed (owned as tedious when his back is turned); it is the coarse familiar, permitted to be familiar; it is the incompetent creature primed like a parrot, with raptures transcendental, or good plain homely vituperation—it is sights like these, when Self looks on, that are to be trusted, and collected for evidence.—And sights like these I have seen in Germany too often for the chronicler not to allude to them as frequent phenomena,—the more, since, I repeat, the false state of opinion which endures and multiplies them

exercises a poisonous and a paralyzing influence alike on the strong and on the less strong artist, and enables the worthless and the venal still further to hold back Art, by abusing the credulity of the public.

DR. SPOHR'S MUSIC.

A CRITICISM.

DR. SPOHR'S MUSIC.

A CRITICISM.

A shrine unvisited—Reasons for avoiding the subject—Reasons for dealing with it—Decline of popularity—Dr. Spohr's influence on Germany as a writer for the violin—His *concertos*—His chamber-music—His orchestral richness—His symphonies—His operas—Want of melodic freshness—Want of dramatic vigour—His oratorios.

AMONG the stations which the pilgrim of Music in Germany might conceive himself bound to visit is the pleasant town of Cassel. The same reasons, however, as would tempt me entirely to avoid the subject, were it possible, have made that little capital a shrine unvisited by me. To write of an excellent man—a worthy musician still living, and still pursuing the career of honourable industry in creation—is not easy for one

who conceives that the influence which such a celebrity has exercised on his art in Europe is already proved to have been partial or curiously transitory. But it is not admissible, when treating of modern German music, to pass over the career and works of Dr. Spohr—such utter silence being more disrespectful to the artist's self, and more offensive to his admirers, than the most qualified admiration could possibly be.

The secrets of the temporary charm exercised over most lovers of German art by Dr. Spohr's compositions, and of the no less general sequel, a gradual disenchantment with respect to them, are not difficult to unriddle, if we consider the strange union of polished richness of manner and meagreness of idea which the bulk of his music presents; and if we recollect, that whereas manner fascinates admiration, it is the union of imagination and thought—it is matter, in short—that retains respect. On making acquaintance with a new author and a new style, few listeners can coolly determine in what proportion the above superficial and internal merits are combined. For a while, chords and closes which they have not heard before—an attractive distribution of instruments—a full sonority, the mono-

tonous elaboration of which has not yet been found out, can seduce the ear into forgetting that the subjects wrought upon are neither new nor true ones—or into fancying that it may have unluckily began with some of the less vigorous and felicitous compositions of a master who can think more originally than he has done in the example under consideration.—Beyond this, an independent charm and merit exist in certain devices analogous to the mixtures of the painter's *palette* — a certain individuality and genius even,—which, within their own limit, and irrespectively of all other considerations, demand recognition. Colour has "a soul to be saved," as well as form, as well as idea. But were men to recognise Domenichino merely by his deep golden yellow, or Wouvermanns solely because of his white horse, and if men became convinced that the one had only second-hand expression, and the other only threadbare and theatrical romance to exhibit, however effectively the yellow and the white might set off borrowed fancies or assemblages of objects not worth the painting—in the hundredth as well as in the tenth work—the time would come (for most of them) at which such applications of gold or silver, in

place of being regarded as inventions, would be rejected as tricks by which taste was outraged and appetite satiated.

Some such conviction is apt to steal into, and ultimately to possess the minds of those who commenced their intercourse with Dr. Spohr's music the most enthusiastically. One section of his numerous compositions excepted—the rest, on short experience, may be instantaneously recognised by their strong family likeness one to the other, and will be far longer remembered by their manner than by their matter. When this manner has been once mastered, the decline and fall of admiration is merely a question of time. Some men can worship a set smile longer than others, but all end sooner or later in worshipping it less than they did when it began to smile on them.

There is more, however, than "set smile" in Dr. Spohr's music. It has its times and places of vitality and individual intelligence, as well as that general air of swooning, over-luxurious, elaborate grace, which conceals its poverty in significance and variety, so well, and so long, with some even for ever. The excepted section of Dr. Spohr's compositions referred to—all that he has pro-

duced for the violin as a *solo* instrument, permanently establishes him among the great German composers, and claims high and grateful honour.

Before Dr. Spohr came, the great violinists who had given to Europe law and gospel, canons of playing, and music to play, had been mostly Italians and Frenchmen — Corelli, Geminiani, Giardini, Rode, Viotti, and others. Following the law of Italian composition, in proportion as Opera had become more and more seductively developed, their writings, however melodiously charming, had become thinner and thinner—as regards scientific merit, lingering behind a time in which Symphony, Overture, Quartett, and *Sonata*, were rapidly monopolizing all that deep contrapuntal science which had of old belonged exclusively to sacred vocal composition,—and essentially ephemeral, because they were merely calculated to exhibit the effects and graces, not so much of the instrument, as of particular players on that instrument. — With this, the style of execution changed, and the love for a particular form of melody was allowed so largely to predominate, that, provided large *cantilenas* were

alternated with showy individualities of passage, the public asked for little beyond. Opposed to such flimsy pieces of brilliancy, where every grace and freak, moreover, was noted, so as to spare the executant any labour of invention, such more solid yet simpler *concertos* as Mozart's, in which the player was expected to work out, embroider, and finish the composer's sketch, had no chance. The former required execution —the latter, genius under instant command. On the other hand, such strict *concerto* writing as Beethoven's, who made the *solo* player merely one of an orchestra—tying him and taming him, and only setting him free to show his power when the *cadenza* arrived—could not be rated as wholly filling the end proposed. Self-effacement is of itself meritorious and dignified; but when we repair to witness display, self-effacement is not the merit nor the dignity that we desire to meet. We then want power, mastery, resource, individuality exhibited; and if they be exhibited so as to conciliate sound principles, noble forms, and skilful structure in Art—if they be put forth in embellishment of great and true thoughts—the exhibition is a high intellectual pleasure, as such raised far

above the triumphs which belong to pieces exciting mere superficial wonderment.

This combination has been felicitously and thoroughly effected by Dr. Spohr, in his *solo* violin music. I speak here not merely of his Concertos, but also of his *solo* quartetts, still more of his *duetts* for two instruments; in which the compromise betwixt what is classical and severe, and what is exciting and gracious, could hardly be carried to higher perfection. Curiously enough, in these exhibitional works, his thoughts and phrases have a nerve, a brightness, and a contrast, which seem to fail the master, when composition, for composition's sake (and without reference to display), has been the task in hand. He is here less tedious in structural writing—warmed, as it were, by the necessity of producing an immediate effect on his audience, out of the languors, delays, pedantries, which oppress us in almost all his other works. The intense personal self-occupation, which, when he approaches Music as a thinker, so often seduces him into weariness, is a safeguard to him when he creates as a *player*. Even his double quartetts are not guiltless of dreary and over-wrought passages, stale thoughts, barren

spaces. They cannot be laid up with the best writings of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven (not, for courtesy's sake, to speak of more modern writers). But his *Concertos* and *Duos* are, of their kind, first of the first; and that their production, performance, and practice, has been a blessed thing for the great and noble school of violin-players in Germany, is a fact no more to be denied than that Mozart helped opera a step forward, and Beethoven the orchestra, and Clementi the pianoforte.

I have sometimes speculated how far the circumstance of *solo* exhibition on the violin being the centre from which Dr. Spohr's creative force has radiated, may or may not have influenced him, when trying the larger and more general range of musical invention. A late ingenious German writer has spent some ingenuity in denouncing the pianoforte as a starting point—forgetting that, on its keyboard, the full score can be somehow represented; and that, though all players are apt when writing to be seduced into the pettinesses of finger-music, all the least meretricious, and grandest, and most original composers of modern times—Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer — have been

great players. But we have no such list of instances for the violin. So far as I can recollect, Dr. Spohr is the only *concerto* performer on a stringed instrument who has attempted to win great general reputation as a composer; and thus, comparison being denied to us, it is impossible to ascertain how far his imagination may have been thereby trammelled, without his own connivance. But few will deny that it is in this special style of composition that Dr. Spohr rises highest: the limits of his power being indicated in the fact, that his chamber-music—in which the pianoforte, not the violin, is principal—is a failure (the well-known Quintett with wind instruments making the exception). Another special merit of interest and value is indisputably his property. In orchestral combination, Dr. Spohr's gift of colour has great attractiveness. He produces a certain richness of sound, by an even balance betwixt the wind and stringed instruments, which is delightful and satisfying—satiating only because it is not accompanied by any variety, or by any reserve. The treasures of the *cornucopia* are showered upon us by him in perpetual fullness—no single tint or flavour being allowed to preponderate,

or, by being produced in pure and solitary brightness, to enhance the splendour of the full harmony which follows it. Hence the overtures and symphonies of Dr. Spohr rank with me as second in merit to his double quartetts, *Concertos*, and less ambitious compositions for the violin. The rhythm of his Overture to "Jessonda" causes it to stand out from among its brethren. His Symphony in D minor is pleasing, because it is naturally expressive—sweet without sickliness, and solid without stupidity. The *allegro* and the *march*, again, in his "Power of Sound" Symphony, are among their composer's happiest inspirations—as such, printing themselves deeply and distinctly in the memory of the most fastidious. But whereas, in compositions on so vast a scale, mere treatment will not suffice to interest—and there must be vigour of idea, and vivacity of contrast—and whereas the first thoughts of Dr. Spohr are apt to be threadbare, insipid, and uninteresting — it is curious to observe the expedient to which he has resorted, during his career, to hide this primal poverty. In place of addicting himself to a wise and scrutinizing study of melody—such as we have reason to think was never out of Haydn's

view,* whence Haydn's extraordinary fecundity and progress — it would seem as if the excellent *Kapellmeister* of Cassel had fancied that ambitious and mystical subjects, necessarily implied picturesque and various thoughts—and, confounding objects with means of illustration, had conceived that such titles as "Human Destiny," "the Sounds of Life," "the Seasons of the Year," &c., would stand him in stead, and deceive the public as well as the master, into forgetting that each new experiment was essentially more poor, more barren, more cloying than its predecessor.—It would be interesting to ex-

* There are few points in Music less carefully studied than this same matter of melody. There are few in which judicious study would bring a richer repayment: since I am convinced that by cultivation, self-scrutiny, with a perpetual reference to ease and nature, rather than to an over-solicitous originality, a vein, originally thin, may be strengthened, swelled in bulk, and rendered precious. That mere practice in tune-making will do something for writers of a peculiar organization, may be seen by comparing the sickly and imitative airs of Donizetti's "Anna Bolena," with the fourth act of his "Favorite," and his *Serenade* in "Don Pasquale"—both operas written when he was "written out," as the phrase is. But thought, selection, polish, with a perpetual reference to attract, and not to astonish, will do more—not, indeed, supply the place of inspiration; but add much expression, pertinence, and symmetry to fancies in their birth characterless and feeble.

amine how far habits of life and occupation, modes of thought, and expansion or reserve of artistic sympathies, have tended to conduce to this indifference to first ideas — by bringing about a frame of complacent and mechanical industry, to which every theme that presents itself is equally valuable and new; but such examination must be left for musical biographers to come. It is enough to state the result, and to bring forward the want of freshness and monotony of the composer, as a reason why, after a time, all but a small circle of admirers, become wearied of his music, — and wherefore his influences upon the world of German composers have been little, or none, and with the many have already died out.

We shall see this more clearly, if, turning from his instrumental compositions, we think, for one instant of Dr. Spohr's operas. Strictly speaking, his writings cannot be called unmelodious; since music more symmetrical than his has never been written. The most graceful Italian garden, where

"Grove nods to grove—each alley has its brother,"

is not arranged with a more perpetual refer-

ence to reflexion, parallel, reply, repetition, than the largest or the least piece of handiwork put forth by this arithmetically-orderly composer. Further, Dr. Spohr's vocal ideas and phrases have, for the most part, a certain suavity and flow, belonging to the good school of graceful *cantabile*, eminently commendable, when not indisputably charming. But it is difficult, nay, I may say, at once impossible, to cite any *motivo* from his pen, which, by its artless vivacity, seizes and retains the ear; and there are few of his melodies that do not recall better tunes, by better men. Perhaps, no one but himself has written three operas that keep the stage—which "Faust," "Zemire und Azor," and "Jessonda," may be said to do—without having added a solitary bar to the stores of his country's popular music. It is impossible to mistake his manner of treating or combining his materials; but the leading phrases of his finest airs, such as the great songs of *Cunigonda*, *Faust*, and *Mephistopheles*, in "Faust,"—the *romance* in "Zemire und Azor,"—and the opening of the pleasing duet betwixt *Amazili* and *Nadori*, in "Jessonda,"—have not a trace of such individuality as that by which we recognise a

tune by Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Auber, or, even, in his happiest moments, by Bellini. They are elegant, and sweet; but without character, and without personality.—Local colour (as the word is understood) there is none in his operas—save an attempt at abruptness, perhaps, in some of the music given to *Mephistopheles*, and a certain voluptuous oriental languor in the funeral music which opens the story of the widow of Malabar. Yet Dr. Spohr seems, from the first, to have rather courted than avoided subjects calling for the most brilliant and various colouring; to have sought for his effects in *costume* and scenery (so to say) rather than in passion. A national instinct towards the mystic and supernatural, drove him to select "Faust" as a subject, long ere Weber wrote "Der Freischütz." Yet compare the Brocken music of Dr. Spohr's opera, which might be a dance of Swiss milkmaids, with Weber's supernatural scenes in the "Wolf's Glen," and the weakness and want of significance in the former, are enough to lead the uninitiated to imagine that the labour must have been one of compulsion, not love. The intention to be fantastic and fearful may have been there; but

the result is little better than a harmless and quaint *bergerie*.

This general and gentle insipidity of tone, again, in Dr. Spohr's first thoughts, is impressed more ineffaceably on the hearer, in his operas than in his instrumental compositions—by his mannerism—by his perpetual use of chromatic harmonies and progressions—by one or two favourite devices of counterpoint and accompaniment, and by the thickness (rather than richness) of the tissue in which he loves to set his idea, be it ever so minute. His indifference to the text or the humour of the scene, is as complete as it is with the most flimsy of the Italian opera-makers. Let the situation be ever so impassioned, let the stir and the hurry of the music have been ever so significantly prefaced and prepared for, the climax never comes with Dr. Spohr. Throughout the "Faust" and "Jessonda," with all his skill, he never manages either to fascinate or to excite,—but falls flat and dull;—midway betwixt the melodic German opera-writers, of whom Mozart was the greatest, and the symphonic school of stage composers, of whom Beethoven was the first. And the attention, after being once, twice, thrice excited

and disappointed, subsides into a tranquil acquiescence with the respectable endowments of the musician; which in its turn (with persons of impatient and excitable spirits) wanes into an *ennui* that no reason can combat, that no conviction can cure.

If as an opera-composer, Dr. Spohr cannot be acquitted of vapidity and tediousness (arising from an essential poverty in the dramatic element), we shall not find these compensated for by any extraordinary gravity or grandeur in his sacred music. His melody is not better in his oratorios than in his operas; and his science is more conventional—moving within still narrower limits on sacred than on profane ground. In all that formed the delight of the elder ecclesiastic writers, Dr. Spohr shows himself at best a timid and pedantic scholar. His fugues are lean, monotonous, and undignified; introduced frequently enough to prove that he does not hold with those sceptics of the modern school who decry fugual writing, as an insolent parade of the periwig—but, alas! never introduced without also showing painful inferiority and lack of resource in their maker.—Curiously dead and stale, again, are Dr. Spohr's recitatives,—singu-

larly uncouth to declaim, owing to his immoderate use of chromatic modulation; and without grasp, or solemnity, or coherence with the spirit of Holy Writ. Now that the seduction excited by the manner of "The Last Judgment" has subsided among the English—now that we can separate the awe of the subject of that oratorio from the enamelled smoothness of demi-tint in which it has been finished off by the musical colourist — we listen with as much weariness as wonder to the small and undignified voices that narrate the tremendous incidents of the hour of eternal doom and consolation. The *mezzo-soprano* recitative that introduces the final quartett and chorus of the First Part, the bass recitative which, early in the Second Part, prefaces the coming of terror, wrath, and destruction, may be referred to, as justifying, with their timid and unmeaning feebleness, a criticism which, without instances cited, might be thought disrespectfully severe. Let any one that studies the union of sound with sense compare these with any similar pages by Handel,—or with "There were Shepherds," in "The Messiah;"* or with

* To those desirous of examining further, may be recommended a comparison betwixt the deeper portions of Handel's

the passage introducing *Miriam's* song of triumph in "Israel," where the most soulless of singers must be upborne, animated, and ennobled by the phrases set down for him to deliver;—and not merely the mistaken system, but the powerlessness and want of poetry in the modern writer, will reveal themselves too clearly to be questioned.

Still this "Last Judgment" (of Dr. Spohr's three oratorios, his first and freshest composition) is not to be left without a word in hearty admiration of certain portions of it,

most famous oratorio, and Dr. Spohr's "Calvary," where the newer composer has not shrunk from setting the same scenes, nay, almost the same words, as his illustrious predecessor. And here, if Handel's thoughts vindicate themselves the sublimity of their inspiration, Handel's science reveals itself as no less colossal. It is remarkable how every vocal chord of the old German writer "draws blood" by the perfect skill with which it is combined and adapted for the voices; it is no less observable how, with the modern master, ignorance or disdain of the powers and privileges of vocal effect, deprives the most ambitious of his choruses of force, authority, and brilliancy. Strain, difficulty, and confusion are every where—owing to the reckless want of selectness with which the inner parts of the vocal quartett are written. In spite of the enormous means of effect added to the orchestra since Handel's time, whereas *his* least vehement choruses strike us down by their force, Spohr's most violent ones weary us by their comparative impotence.

which are as sound and as real as the parts just denounced are false in taste and poor in meaning. The double quartetts "Lord God of Heaven and Earth," and "Blest are the departed," show Dr. Spohr on his highest ground as an expressive interpreter of situation—as combining pure vocal melody with harmonies of a touching and holy solemnity.—In these the super-sweetness which elsewhere cloys us in his writings, is felt less than usual—because of the superior vigour and simplicity of the phrases. There is something at once gorgeous and pathetic in the effect produced by his peculiar combination and alternation of the *solo* and the choral voices. The melancholy grandeur of the evening hour, when the wide western horizon is piled with one vision of cloud-glory above another, as the forms and hues change and fade away, and the blue sky deepens, when the more splendid tints have floated past,—is recalled by this music—by the funeral strain especially. It is the type and perfection of Dr. Spohr's one form of devotional utterance:—it keeps its place in the mind, as a high thing among the high things of Art, however steadily the entire work, on being more frequently heard, sinks in consideration,

loses interest, and becomes appreciated as the manufacture of one unselect and industrious—with whom Opera, Part-song, Overture, Quartett, all take the same physiognomy, abide the same conduct, and are all tamed and trained into the same mechanically-constraining mould of structure.

Such are a few hints and characteristics of the talent of the patriarch of German musical composition. They are put forth merely as criticisms on works before the world, as such fair objects of comparison: and the inference to be drawn from them, as foreshowing the place which the excellent *Kapellmeister* of Cassel will hold in the Pantheon of Musicians, may be left to those who agree with the justice of what has been advanced.—I have a comfort in believing that this chapter will never reach those whom it would pain me to pain, by offering an appreciation of their idol so unflattering, and which (to them) will seem so unfair and irreverent.

A GLANCE AT VIENNA.

1844.

A GLANCE AT VIENNA.

CHAPTER I.

TRADITIONS OF VIENNA.

Objects of pilgrimage—The future preferred to the past—Burney's time compared with the present—The residents at Vienna in Burney's time—Gluck, Hasse, Faustina—Salieri, Gasmann, with a biographical sketch—The greater period which followed—Austrian influences on art—Mozart, Beethoven—Strange decline of creative energy—Its causes to be explained.

THERE is no lover of art to whom the name of Vienna has not been a spell of power from his youth upwards. The capital that could attract and retain Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, will, by many, be exalted as the first musical shrine that should be sought by the holiday pilgrim.

But the objects of pilgrimage are different. To some it will be the past—to some the future.

I had long believed that Vienna must be a place with a musical past chiefly; for the musical present, which consists merely in a constant repetition of favourite works by favourite masters, and which does nothing in nurture of fresh creative art, is, after all, only *a past* prolonged—leading to nothing, and implying as much mechanical tradition as real reverence. The poet has finely said—

> "We do not serve the dead—the past is past.
> God lives, and lifts his glorious mornings up
> Before the eyes of men, who wake at last,
> And put away the meats they used to sup,
> And on the dry dust of the ground outcast
> The dregs remaining of the ancient cup,
> And turn to wakeful prayer and worthy act."

The test of art being in a flourishing state, is not appreciation only, it is also production. Compare the average gains of the musician in the present day with what they were in 1772, when Burney visited Vienna!—count the profits now derived from popular sympathy,—and then consider the comparative pittance at that period bestowed on the artist of genius by the princely patronage to which he was obliged to look for his reward.—Compare the audiences and the plaudits at command of the master in our time, with what

they were in Burney's! Yet what was there for any musical pilgrim to Vienna in 1844 comparable with what Burney found there in the early morning of instrumental music's brightest day?

The comparison is worth following out. In 1772, Gluck was residing in the Austrian capital in all the prime of his powers—with his "Iphigenie" complete in his head, though not committed to paper. Noverre (the most poetical and intellectual of ballet-masters) was superintending the *spectacles* at the opera. Hasse, the composer, and his wife Faustina the ex-*prima donna*, were resting on their laurels, and had been giving lessons to *L'Inglesina*, Miss Cecilia Davis the singer. The lady could communicate her own recollections of Farinelli, and her own anecdotes of Handel's "great style of playing the harpsichord and organ," together with her criticism (how characteristic this of her nation!) on his *cantilena*, as "being often rude." Haydn had not yet wholly beaten out of the field the elder symphonist, Vanhall. Salieri had composed "Il Barone," as "a scholar of Herr Gàsmann."

The last-named master and scholar are both worth lingering with for different reasons. The former is perhaps best remembered by Mozart's

fixed idea in his latter days, that he was dying of Italian poisons administered to him at Salieri's instance;—a sick dream, not more fearful and baseless, however, than similar notions which have stirred other German musical circles during our own lives! Yet after Dr. Burney's visit, Salieri became the composer of note who was appointed to finish "Les Danaides," when Gluck faltered over the task because of old age. He was the composer most in vogue, too, it would seem — since annalists tell us that the brilliant success of his "Tarare" in Paris, at the *Grand Opera*, caused him to be called for in person — a compliment which had been paid to no predecessor.—The claims on recollection of Herr Gasmann are of a different order. He was one of those Bohemian musicians concerning whom an interesting and picturesque chapter of local history might be furnished to the more universal chronicler of Music. Born at Brüx in 1729, educated at the seminary of Komathau, and trained in music by one Woberzil, the choir-master at Brüx, the boy seems to have picked up much which is rarely learned in a course of orderly musical culture. Among other instruments, he learned the harp;

and on his father wishing to make a tradesman of him, turned rebel, and, with *King David's* instrument on his back, trudged out into the world to seek his fortune.—This was not hard to find, since he seems to have possessed a simple and genial nature, as well as the true artist's temperament; and at Carlsbad (even then a rallying place for noble persons) his success was so great, that, in fifteen days, say the annalists, he gathered together nearly a thousand crowns! For a boy who had been turned out with a florin in his pocket, this seemed a treasure—a sum, at least, offering means for fulfilling his long-cherished desire of going to Italy. But Gasmann could also spend like a genius, it appears; for we next learn that, by the time he got to Venice, the purse of *Fortunatus* became empty—and that the youth, dispirited in a strange land, threatened with poverty, and unable to make his talent known, was found in some *calle* or *piazza*, drowned in tears, by a Samaritan priest, who stopped and inquired their cause. The Bohemian had got a little Latin at his seminary, and in this dead language explained himself with such success that the Priest took home the wanderer, kept him as an inmate, gave him masters,

and subsequently sent him to "be finished" by Padre Martini at Bologna. After two years of study at Bologna, Gasmann became organist in a convent at Venice; and there rose to such high repute among the nuns (in those days no bad connoisseurs—the number of ecclesiastical music-schools in Venice being considerable), that one sister spoke of the Bohemian to a distinguished amateur, Count Lionardo Veneri (*Veniero?*). This magnificent personage proved even a better *Mæcenas* than the priest had been; —since he took Gasmann home, gave him apartments in the Veniero palace, the use of the Veniero purse, and, it is expressly added, "leave to invite ten or a dozen persons every day" to the Veniero table.—The day of such munificences has passed away; or rather, the humour to indulge in them has changed classes. Noble things are still done, but they are done by the Broadwoods and Erards — the burgher rather than the aristocratic lovers of Art!

There is more to tell concerning Gassmann, which marks character and illustrates manners. His fame, in 1763, as a dramatic and ecclesiastical composer, had passed from Venice to Vienna;—he was sent for to the Austrian capi-

tal by the Emperor Francis I.; and received there with appointments most liberal for those times, and great court favour. Being desirous of marrying the daughter of a decayed nobleman, it is said that his popularity, and the visible helplessness displayed by his arriving at court with ends of silk adhering to his coat, mollified the Emperor Joseph (who did not love that his artists should marry) into authorizing the match. Five years after his marriage, when Gasmann died, in 1774, in consequence of an accident, the Empress Maria Theresa (who *did* love that her artists should have family ties) offered to be godmother to a second little girl, born a few days after her father's death, and settled a pension on both daughters. The list of the works of this prosperous man is considerable—including sacred *cantatas*, chamber-music, and twenty operas; but how completely have his name and fame passed away! In no art, not even the actor's, is oblivion so complete as in creative Music. Yet such a life as the one above baldly sketched from a biographical dictionary, if thoroughly told, must be full of character and instruction.

Such were the second-rate men of Vienna,

at the period of Burney's visit. At that time "the little Mozart," so far from being dreamed of as a rival to Signor Salieri, was spoken of as a prodigious child, who had failed fully to justify the promise of his infancy. Mademoiselle Martinetz was the great amateur singer. Metastasio gave laws to taste, being by many (Burney and himself among the number) reputed to be not merely the elegant opera-song writer that we still think him, but the great dramatist of his age. There were still to be heard in St. Stephen's masses by Colonna, Handel's model, and other of the old Italians.—Music was then, in short, in its youth, with not half of its faculties developed, or its tendencies suspected.

On the greater period which closed the past and opened the present century—when Vienna was successively influenced by Haydn in his elder years, by Mozart in his prime, by Beethoven during his long life, by Rossini as a passing stranger, and which ended, so far as creation goes, with the death of Schubert in 1821—there is no need here to dwell for the purpose of illustrating my remark, and working out my comparison. Since then, we have been able pretty minutely to know and to follow the course of

musical creation in the Austrian capital without fear of any very remarkable manifestation there being overlooked.

It is now no longer with Music as it was in Burney's time, when publication hardly existed —when intercourse was rare—when the *dilettante* had to be handed from ambassador to ambassador in search of the masters of Music, most of whom were chiefly to be found in princely ante-chambers. No war has interposed to barricade frontiers, or to keep precious manuscripts under home lock and key. There is little modern German music of which a specimen has not found its way to persons on the alert in other countries.—For whom, then, and for what, would any pilgrim in search of creative genius, rather than of executive skill, have found it worth his while to shape his course to Vienna during the last twenty years?—Such a question could receive only one answer. The *rationale* of the all but utter blank disclosed, is pregnant with interest. Few more interesting subjects of speculation in art exist, than the history of Music in Austria; and the perpetual strife which it would reveal, betwixt a joyous, genial, abundant, natural life and power, upspringing in the people — and the enervating

influences of a state of society in which every intellectual tendency has been, on system, suppressed, killed, corrupted by bad government. That the three greatest men who have adorned modern German instrumental music, selected Vienna for their abiding city, says much for its charms as a residence for the musician, when it is recollected that two—Mozart and Beethoven—conceived themselves (and not unjustly) to be there denied those honours of fame and fortune, which they might have claimed, and did receive, in other places. There is no trace of any Austrian sovereign bestowing as much appreciating patronage and lively interest on his best musician, as Frederic the Great, in the Prussian metropolis, bestowed on his flute master, his opera-singers, and the composer who set his scores in order. Mozart was put off by his "good Emperor" with South German jokes and sweet words;—Beethoven was forsaken for Rossini and "Chinese porcelain;"—Schubert was ill remunerated, and little known in his life-time beyond the homely circle of his own intimates; "Fidelio," when it was first represented, was a thorough and disheartening failure; "Euryanthe" (the last new German opera of any value, pro-

duced at Vienna) was, in the emptiness of vapid Austrian wit, called "L'Ennuyante." Great executant players—such as Liszt, Thalberg, Ernst —have of late days excited the utmost enthusiasm there; but the great German composers of modern times have, with the exception of Meyerbeer, visited the Austrian capital rarely, and given out nothing thence. How this can have come to pass, with a people notoriously so eager after amusement, so passionate in love of music, so hospitable to strangers, and so liberal to artists, the pilgrim who sees in Vienna what I saw, and who believes that art, manners, and opinion, are all open to certain good or evil influences, may possibly divine. The history of government and of morals in Austria may one day be written, and will throw some light on the curious extinction of "the spark divine"—more sudden and complete even than can be explained on the theory that every art must have its periods of decay and exhaustion to succeed its cycles of prosperity and plenty, as well as every nation.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN THE DANUBE.

Picturesque journey — Up the Main from Frankfort — Main scenery—Halt at Miltenberg—The King of Bavaria's birthday—A word about Ratisbon—The Danube more picturesque than the Rhine—Scenery ampler and more various—Greater variety in *costume*—Primitive steamer—Passau—Drawing of a lottery—Linz—Visit to St. Florian's—The organ at St. Florian's—Mölk—Prandauer the architect—Inhabitants of the palace-monastery—The organ at Mölk—A word about the *Abbé* Stadler—Crazy mineralogist—Down to Nussdorf.

It may be said that the very turn of mind which induced the speculations of the foregoing chapter, and the very adjournment of my visit to Vienna, till I had seen most of the other German capitals, render me an unfair witness. Yet, laying aside questions of high Art, and not dwelling on other determining causes of personal interest, I may truly say that I never set forth towards any place with greater expectations of pleasure, than those which accompanied me in

the long vacation of 1844, when, leaving the noise of that great inn Frankfort behind, we turned up the Main, making a four days' journey by steamer to Würzburg; thence to Nuremburg —and, after two days' halt there, to the Danube at Ratisbon.

A more delicious route is not to be traced. The Main, more placid in its scenery than the Lahn or the Moselle, or that curious volcanic mountain-brook, the Ahr, is still rich in variety, —with many a delicious town and valley nook, in which one could dream whole summer weeks away; and a staple of rich, flowery, pastoral meadow-scenery on its banks, distinguishing it among the tributaries of the Rhine.—The people of the district, in 1844, seemed cheerful and simple, having names that reminded one of the "Pilgrim's Progress" — *Hailsieve*, *Bubble-wine*, and others of the kind. At the charming old village-town of Miltenberg, where we halted, we had the good luck of coming in for the celebration of the King's birthday, which was kept by a little concert of the *Sing-verein*—the presentation to the same association of a banner worked by the ladies of Miltenberg, with a speech delivered by a damsel with trembling

enthusiasm,—lastly, a ball, at which the passing strangers, no matter whether knight or squire, got all the best partners ; and after which, those who were young and civil could, the next day, show pansies and other token-flowers, to be kept religiously till the next festive occasion, and the next sentimental parting.—It seems to me now, as if I could write a book on the pleasures and pictures of that Main journey, and a library on the goodly things of Nuremburg—that gem of the old cities of Germany—which those who relish it once, must relish more and more on every subsequent return, so exquisitely rich is it in character, no less than in detail.

Then who will not be seized by the contrast which exists betwixt such a stately, opulent city, still clad, as it were, in all its gorgeous embroideries, little frayed or corroded by Time, and such a fierce, grim, gloomy place as Ratisbon !—a city which looks as though it had been pierced through and through by the sword; and scorched or scathed by the fires of War ; the streets of which are made menacing with towers, and where the Town-House still contains complete all its ghastly appurtenances of rack, thumbscrew, and other implements of torture.

The Cathedral at Ratisbon, too (its cloister pavement rough with the effigies of prelates and ecclesiastical princes), has in this wealth of monuments a character of power, not discordant with the stern, warlike, and cruel features of the place. And by the town runs that violent, capricious, rapid stream the Danube, the picturesque features of which are as yet utterly unexhausted, and dimly understood — at least by English travellers.

No days of my life have left a stronger impression of vivid pleasure on my mind than my days spent on this river betwixt Ratisbon and Vienna. It is not merely that the objects are more remote, less pawed and profaned by vacancy fancying itself admiration, than the familiar features of the Rhine. They are on a grander scale—more various:—the river runs along a plain, and not in a trough as the Rhine may be said to do betwixt Bingen and the Seven Mountains. As we go down from Ratisbon, on the left bank, hill above hill rises at a respectful distance from the stream, till Nattern-berg is past; after which point Tyrolese cottages begin to peep out among the sombre pine woods. Our steamer was an odd, uncouth

boat, with ropes for chains, and wood for fuel. Every peasant that stepped on board was a figure to paint. There were stalwart men, in comfortable blue coats, long Hessian boots, and black leather breeches, with travelling knife and fork sticking out;—linen merchants, looking more like Chinese or Tartars than Christian folk; clad in white fringed linen, with white blankets threaded with fine colours flung over their shoulders, who sat on their bales of linen, as brown, bright-eyed, sagacious, and still, as so many mastiffs; loutish jockeys going down to Passau to ride a race, who played ferociously at *spadi* with a pack of dirty and unintelligible cards all the way; a grand bearded captain and conducteur, who spoke strange dialects—Magyar, Illyrian, how could we know?—and who only wanted turban, caftan, and sash, to fulfil the child's notion of Oriental kings. In looking at these novelties, pleasantly slipped away the half-day betwixt Ratisbon and Passau—the Coblentz of the Danube; and more picturesque than Coblentz by one stream.—Passau, again, was full of picture, with its *Volks'fest*, which included a horse-race, and (well-a-day for the innocence of the peasantry under paternal government!)

the drawing of a lottery. I was sitting in the sun on the hill above *Mariâ Hilf* enjoying the splendid view, the morning after our arrival, when the news of this wholesome popular pastime was brought up by a roll of drums and a flourish of trumpets, as each new prize was proclaimed. Coming down, we met a peasant woman of the lowest class, embracing, like a baby, her prize—and what a prize! It was a clock;—no sober-going useful creature, but a gay French *pendule*, with four black marble pillars and a pediment, and a *Troubadour* with his guitar or *Sappho* and her lyre, sitting a-top. And there its winner stood a proud woman, the centre of a little crowd. An old fruit-wife, as brown and wrinkled as a walnut, left her apples, pears, and cakes, in the shadow of the gate, to get up and sympathize. Around the triumphant creature stood wondering children on tiptoe, regarding the prize.

Thus, they thought, must angels shine,

while even two big Bavarian soldiers, ferociously moustached, condescended to loiter and lift up their huge gauntletted hands in admiration of the treasure.—The scene was full of gaiety and character. The moralities of it came after.

One peculiarity which distinguishes the Danube from the Rhine, is the presence of grand palace-monasteries. There was no passing these. We halted at Linz, to visit St. Florian's, and again at Mölk, to pay our vows at the organ of the splendid and fantastic-looking pile that hangs over the stream.

The special grace of *St. Florian* was his gift of extinguishing fires; and in the great square at Linz, stands an effigy of the holy person, wearing a sort of *Amadis* dress of casque and fluttering kilt, pointing a shapely leg with minuet grace, and holding in his hand a machine like a Bavarian beer-glass, from which a stone stream of water is always descending on a small polygonal building under his saintly care. Arcadian, however, as is his statue, his stronghold, some seven miles from Linz, is a more princely palace than one could fancy ever builded to any *St. James Jessamy*, even by Austrian sensuality, superstition, and earnest good faith combined.

For a few miles the road from Linz to St. Florian's is the post-road to Vienna. At Eversberg, we crossed the Traun, a sea-green mountain-stream, arrow-swift and ill to guide.

There a friendly guide-post warned us to turn aside, and thence the path becomes narrower and more rural; leading upward into as fair a district as this world has to show. The road ascends slowly among thickets rather than woods; betwixt sloping banks gay with strange flowers; and here and there, these recede and make place for meadows, where huge white bullocks were grazing—bordered plenteously by apple, cherry, pear, and plum trees undecayed and in full bearing. The one or two peasants we met were unusually sleek and civil. As we drove on, on one side were revealed splendid openings of the hills of the *Wienerwald*; and far and blue in the distance on the other, rose the Salzburg Alps. At length, after mounting a bare sweep of arable land, and turning the corner of a close, thriving wood, the palace came into view—a gorgeous building in the Italian style, reared for the Austrian *clerici* in the reign of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, by Architect Prandauer of St. Pölten, the Palladio of Austria.

Passing the Convent dispensary, and a range of stables immense enough, like the Foscari palace at Venice, to lodge the train of three kings at once, the pilgrim enters by a decorated portal

into a hall, and thence by a sumptuous double staircase into corridors paved with marble, stretching away in long perspective; the ceilings floridly and boldly *stuccoed*, and the doors of the cells—kings' chambers rather!—of the richest walnut-wood with solid brass locks. The *custos* —more of a gentleman's *Scapin*, than a mortified lay brother—with an embroidered *chemise*, spotlessly clean, and a magnificent seal ring, did the honours most courteously. We must first see the refectory, a lofty room with marble pillars, a painted ceiling, and huge ovals of porphyry supported by grouped cupids (not cherubs) for sideboards. From the window the eye travelled over orchards and meadows and woods full of game, and square, pellucid fish ponds, and gardens rich with vegetables—all *St. Florian's* property—so that there was no fear of banquet being wanting conformable with banquet room. Thence we passed into one fine chamber after another, containing a rubbishy collection of pictures; some among them oddly anacreontic (but that is almost canonical)—one calling itself a Van Eyck; and a very ancient series, belonging to an older building on the same site, which is devoted to *St. Florian's* deeds and sufferings.

Our poor *custos* yawned sadly as he led us along.—Not a fig for the pictures cared he—as little for the view without; and, to a warm expression of admiration, replied "that he had had enough of the place." He warmed up a little among the collections of natural history. We must be surprised by the white cuckoo, and the white starling, and the white finch; and be expressly delighted with his pet lion — a landscape hung against the wall, and done entirely in a mosaic of butterflies' wings.—This had been the work of one of the *Chorherren* (or Fellows) of St. Florian's, and had cost its artificer only four years!

The chapel was more to our taste; and here I could honestly express amazement at its magnificence; since, though much is left in white wood and stucco which was intended should be gilt and painted, the stalls of the choir are of richly-inlaid walnut-wood, and the two organ galleries in the choir are among the richest specimens of carving I had then ever seen.—Above the grand entrance stands the third or grand organ, which is only used on high festivals, and seemed set great store by. It is reputed to be one of Father Chrismann's master-works, sur-

passing even the better known instrument at Mölk, in extent and quality—with three ranks of keys, and a pedal-board, fifty-nine stops, and 5,230 pipes. Rich, sweet, and brilliant, in no ordinary degree, the tone seemed to be, so far as I could judge; but, as usual, the organist was away, and the organ out of tune; and weak amateur hands, with two feet, that (when any one is near) alight oftener wrong than right, make but indifferent acquaintance with these leviathans. I could not hear that any of the gentlemen of the monastery solaced himself much with music.

Our *custos*, however, was musical, we found: since, charmed by the rare chance of having guests to talk with, and who admired and envied the comfortable shelter of his retreat, he insisted on our seeing his room. Many a nobleman's son in our colleges would be thankful to be half as amply lodged as he. Sheets of music were lying about, —a fiddle, and a pair of drum-sticks. His favourite amusement, he said, was drumming; and, among these was laid out the last finish to his dinner, a downy peach, and a melting red plum, arranged on a Linz play-bill. But the wanton fellow owned to have had enough of fine

scenery, and royal lodging, and pleasant fare, and dainty clothing. "No one," he assured us, "would stay at St. Florian's longer than he could possibly help." It was strange, from such a scene of cheerful luxury, to take away such an impression of *idlesse* and *ennui*. Holiness seemed neither to be seen nor to be heard of—however gaily it might be exhibited, like Father Chrismann's grand organ, on *St. Florian's* day, the fourth of May, and other high festival days.

We made a second halt at Mölk, having a hankering after these grand Austrian monasteries, with their grand organs; and in those days, something like a hope that we might there light on some such retired enthusiast as an art-novelist would love to establish in such places —one cherishing a purer music in his life and thoughts and fingers, than can be originated or retained by those who ruffle it in the world for honours and appointments. But no such musical recluses have I ever found: once or twice, peevishness and pedantry in obscurity, fancying themselves power in eclipse—but never, alas! that serene spiritual existence of which it is so delightful to dream.—Painting may possibly flourish better with but one gazer for the pic-

ture, in the artist—than Music, with no audience, except it be the musician.

To return—betwixt Linz and Mölk comes the grandest scenery of the Danube above Vienna. As the boat sweeps down to Mauthausen, the Alps rise on the horizon: we saw them glistening white with snow against the deep sky. Then comes the picturesque Schloss Nieder Walsee; and lower down, and further from the shore, the castle of Clam Martinetz rising proudly among the woods. Next, appear the Strüdel and the Wirbel. You have hardly admired Grein, which stands lovesomely at a bend of the river—a tempting-looking white village, with that mixture of foliage among houses that is so largely missed on the Rhine—when a whirl of the narrowed current sweeps you down among rocks which the King of the *Kobolds* must have shaped to show his wondrous adroitness—with here a chapel, and there a crucifix, and anon a tower—I know not in what order coming.—For the power of the water and the power of steam acting in concert, make up a sensation akin to that delicious dream of flying, which every one has enjoyed when a child. The boat seems hardly a hair's breadth from the rocky barrier,—abso-

lutely grazing the very tower and trees which fringe it—when another *twist* of the roaring waters flings you into the midst of a cauldron yet more wrathful, yet more picturesquely bordered; and then the boat—be she even as robust of frame as was our *Mariana*—pauses and staggers as if about to yield, and another sweep of the torrent seizes her. You look into the writhing, boiling whirlpool:—there are shrieks of sailors, outcries of amazement from every stranger and pilgrim,—and it is over;—and the *Mariana* is making her swift and steady way down the Danube, just as if she had not been in "the Devil's Grip." After those seconds of excitement, amounting to positive rapture, I could look at nothing more till the ruin of Weideneck came in sight, and with it the palace of Mölk.

This palace at Mölk is another of Architect Prandauer's buildings. He seems to have contented himself with making the most of the one or two magnificent points which the site presented, and leaving the rest of his work without an idea. The bastion-like *facade* of the monastery abutting on the front of the perpendicular rock, close above the stream, is ingenious, in right of the grace with which a screen,

sweeping the very verge of the precipice with a graceful oval, connects the two wings of the building; while its central arch or portal admits a fair view of the gorgeous church behind it. The remainder of the pile, however imposing because of its extent, does not get beyond a hospital or barrack in architectural style or expression.

The *Mariana* flung us out at the "Ox," almost the poorest inn in Germany at which I ever harboured. However, the landlord was smiling and jolly, had three beautiful children and a huge sociable dog, and a garden-room or pavilion commanding the stream, redolent enough of stable,—but where one could dine with open windows. Then for dinner, besides the national fried chicken of the South, we were treated to trout sweet as May-dew, Erlauer wine (for we were now within reach of Hungarian drinks), and a basket of peaches; which, though marvellously like so many balls of pink and green flannel, gave an air to the banquet.

Till every one of the holy household had eaten, drank, and slept, it would have been useless to go up and knock at the monastery-gate. We should not first have seen St. Florian's:

since that building is richer and grander; while the very position of Mölk, on the edge of one of Europe's grand highways, is calculated to disturb the ideas of seclusion, whether sensual or scholastic, which belong to one of these retreats from the world. Here, besides the *custos*, we fell in with one of the Fellows of the establishment, who was right glad to come down at the evening to the "Ox," and to sit in the tobacco-smoke, and to drink his beer, while he talked war and peace (this was in 1844), and as much about the policy of *Sir Peel*, as an Austrian could be expected to know. He, too, like the *custos* of St. Florian's, revealed lazy dissatisfaction at the manner in which cloister-life went on. It was difficult, he assured us, to keep up the numbers in this luxurious place—though the scholar finds there a renowned and ample library, and the musician another gorgeous organ. The rule, too, in 1844, was something beyond liberty itself. Another of these spoiled children of the Church steamed down with us to Vienna on the following day, having laid aside his clerical garb, "because," he said, "he could not talk to the girls in it"—and for reading, this gay person had no breviary

book, but a translation of "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

While we were waiting for the schoolmaster, who had the key of the organ, in the absence of the Reverend to whom music at Mölk was entrusted, we strolled into the monastery garden. What a paradise was this of dainty devices and luscious fruits!—of pear-trees clipped into pyramids, with flushed bacchanal-looking fruit pushing out their cheeks among the glossy leaves. What a wall was that thatched with loaded fig-trees!—The hot-house, it is true, was filled with onions, where there should have been pine-apples;—but the ground round the espaliers, was carpeted with mignionette and *coreopsis*, and an open door, which introduced us into a tank full of gold fish, fringed by tall walnut-trees, was sentinelled by some of the finest *daturas* and *dahlias* I ever saw. Never were precincts in themselves more teeming, more bounteously cheerful.—Yet the sleep of lethargy, not to say decrepitude, seemed to be over the place.

The schoolmaster is, of course, a person not to be trifled with. When he has to show off his lion to an English *Cræsus*, he will make the

latter, by right prescriptive, wait as long as if he had anything really to do. He must sleep off his dinner and his beer; and he has the ceremony to go through of making some show of clean linen. But this man at Mölk was the most tardy and Beotian of his class I ever met with.

As a player, he could do no more than just exhibit the forty stops of his glorious instrument—about which he seemed to know or to care equally little. He could not tell us what manner of music was executed at Mölk—whether any of the *Chorherren* ever played for their own recreation;—he was not sure whether Herr Staudigl the *basso* had, or had not (as has been said), "once on a time," belonged to the monastery.—A more heavy, uninteresting being could not be imagined; and supposing him in the least to be a type of his class, Music must be all but dead-asleep in those gilded caves of *Trophonius*—the palace-monasteries of Austria.

It was not so some ninety years since, when the *Abbé* Stadler, born at Mölk in 1748, and passed thence to the Abbey of Lilienfeld as a choir boy, early acquired (beside a professor's

knowledge in theology sufficient for a Jesuit seminary) such skill on the organ and piano, as to attract the notice of the Emperor Joseph the Second, who made him successively Abbot of Lilienfeld and Abbot of Kremsmünster. In those high places, Abbot Stadler's masterly organ-playing and skill in composition, gave him a rank among the great *virtuosi* of Austria —though Burney seems to have missed him on his voyage.* On his subsequent removal to Vienna, he became the personal intimate of Haydn and Mozart—and very late in life, undertook to break a lance with Godfrey Weber, in defence of Mozart's much canvassed "Requiem." Parts of the Abbot Stadler's "Jerusalem Delivered," an Oratorio composed by him in his sixtieth year, and some of his motetts and instrumental compositions, made their way to England, when England was less on the alert than it has since become, with regard to foreign music.—It is hazarding little, I apprehend, to assert that no such worthies as the Abbot Stadler were being bred, or

* When Dr. Burney went down the Danube, however, the organs at Passau and Krems arrested his attention, beside the part-singing of the peasantry heard on the bank of the rivers.

finding Emperors to attend to them, among the monasteries of the Danube, in 1844.

Such wakefulness as there might then exist at Mölk was of another kind. The Abbot was a redoubtable mineralogist. We did not ask to see his collections, not understanding the subject; but we fell upon one of his familiars —a quarry-man, the *Sam Weller* of the country-side—and for threadbare-garments, debt, and sociability, its *Richard Swiveller* also. He, too, came down to the "Ox," for his gossip, his beer, and his public—well nigh as fantastic as *Edgar's* self in his rags: which were an old jacket of the gayest cotton, now shrunk and stained and patched; a battered sugar-loaf hat of straw, stuck round with sprigs of *geum* and barberry-clusters, a Tyrolese cockade of bristles and a feather.—Up and down the yard and the *stube*, he hopped on his poor old withered bare feet, with the gait and shrewdness of a lame raven,—telling queer stories, singing heterodox songs, and dancing unlicensed polkas. He had a handkerchief full of gunpowder ready for some blast, which he flourished about so dangerously near the cigar one of us gave him, that landlord

boots, and a passing bagman, who chanced to be nooning at the "Ox," had to plot how to get it out of such random keeping. They told us, that while he was quarrying, this original had, one morning, found a treasure of old coins; whereupon he had bought a couple of cows, and had announced free beef and beer to the village, till all his money should be spent!—Yet he was well accredited as an acute and experienced miner; and talked sensibly enough, when "the bee" could be got out of his bonnet: which, however, was only one minute out of ten. During the other nine, his great desire appeared to be to treat everyone to beer, and to get some person else to pay for it—and I grieve to add that, on his second visit to us at the "Ox," the poor, wrinkled old scaramouch, had drunk so much ere he arrived, as to fall into sad disgrace, and ignominiously to be driven out.

What became of him ultimately, it is not possible to tell—since, shortly after the animated scene of his expulsion, we were "picked off" this curious place of sojourn, by another of the rapid Danube steamers,

with its picturesque crew and company; and early in the same day, reached Nussdorf—the landing-place for the Austrian capital.

CHAPTER III.

AUTUMN MUSIC AND DANCING.

Operas at the *Kärnther Thor* Theatre—The singers—The orchestra—German appreciation of executive talent—Herr Mayseder's playing—His music—Herr Strauss—Coarse scene at the *Sperl*—The exquisite music of Strauss—His capital conducting—A few words on the wild and the trained dance-music of Southern Germany.

THE serious music which I heard at Vienna, though all belonging to a past period—and none marking progress or creative activity in the capital—was neither poor nor unimportant. To begin with opera—at the *Kärnther Thor* Theatre, during my visit, the following works were performed:—"Jessonda," "Fidelio," "Don Juan," "Guillaume Tell," "Les Huguenots,"—and performed, too, by a company of artists more than ordinarily efficient and accomplished, for Germany.

Madame Van Hasselt Barth, and Madame

Stöckl Heinefetter, were the *prime donne*. The former lady had a vocal purity—if not very extraordinary range of vocal execution,—united with German musical enthusiasm, which I have rarely met in other ladies of her country. Her voice was clear, elastic, and perfectly in tune. If not a very interesting, she was a most classical *Donna Anna*—an effective *Valentine*, too, in Meyerbeer's opera; and she has left on my mind the impression of a truly satisfactory singer. When on the stage with her as *Donna Elvira*, Madame Stöckl Heinefetter curbed the untutored force of her stupendous *soprano* voice, and thus seemed, by many degrees, more like an artist than she did when, in "Fidelio," she sang the first part—and raged through Beethoven's passionate music, like a *sesquialtera* stop in an organ, doing its very loudest. The name of the *Zerlina* in "Don Juan," and of the *Marcellina* in "Fidelio," I have forgotten, from which it is fair to fancy that the lady must have been innocuous, if not very arch and winning. I remember the "executant songstress," in "Les Huguenots" by her bulk. At Vienna, all "church matters" were taken out of Meyerbeer's opera. It was there

transmogrified into a Guelph and Ghibelline story:—but the gentlewoman who represented the *Queen Marguerite* of the French version, was the fattest gentlewoman whom I ever saw sit or heard sing; and the florid music of her *sortita* was forced out with a wheezy smothered sound, at once absurd and painful. The Abyssinian proportions, however, of Madame Granichstetten-Vial, appeared to cause neither dismay nor discomfort to her audience. In those days (I know not what Revolution may have since effected) slimness, and the show or the sound of youth, seemed utterly disregarded on the German stage. I saw the great scenes of "Wallenstein," played through at the *Burg Theater*, by a *Friedland*, a *Max*, a *Thekla*, and a *troupe* of playfellows (Madame Rettich, as *Countess Tertsky*, making the exception) whose obesity gave to their motions and groups an odd air of elephants in conversation—of ships lumbering towards each other in a calm.

The tenor of the *Kärnther Thor* theatre, when I visited it, was Herr Erl,—not a powerful singer, but an agreeable one, because his voice was less throaty and nasal than the voice which for the most part appears to be thought ex-

pressive and dramatic by German tenors. The basses were Herren Staudigl, Draxler, and others.—Generally, indeed, the tone both of *solo* voices and chorus, appeared to me better produced in Vienna than in other German towns,—as if the circumstance of Italian opera having retained its stronghold as an established entertainment in the Austrian capital, long after it had perished in Munich, Dresden, and Berlin, had insensibly influenced the vocal taste and studies of the artists there.—The orchestra was a fine one, and played with due intelligence,—but slackly. The operas, though not prepared with any extraordinary nicety, were perfectly known; but this, indeed, is the rule throughout Germany, north and south. Let the singers be ever so vocally raw or unrefined,—let them strain their throats till every vein resembles a bamboo cane,—let them bring out their notes, from under the eye-brows, or down the nostril, or out of the ear,—if a shake is written, something for a shake will be presented—if a *roulade*, the voice will be dragged up and down the ladder,—if a note above the everyday compass be called for, the note must come—even though the hearer, distressed at the sound of its coming,

expects that the next cry will be the cry for a surgeon to the victim of zeal without knowledge!

It would not be uninstructive to consider how far the vitiation and neglect of one of the most captivating materials of musical execution, may be ascribed to the symphonic writers, who have not admitted that the *solo* voice, having the text to deliver, should be considered in a different light to an instrument among instruments — how far it may be charged to the confusion of style caused by the necessity under which German opera-singers stand, of getting through French, Italian, and (of late) English music besides their own, native works,—how far to a national want of ear for the charm of vocal tone. But the hearing of evidence in this matter would bring us into the midst of the great quarrel betwixt schools and countries, which has raged so fiercely in Music, and place us, moreover, face to face with the transcendentalists, whose notions of Art are not to be briefly dismissed, because they are not clearly defined. The heads of such an inquiry being stated, it may be left for the lovers of Mozart, and the believers in Wagner, to enter upon at their pleasure.—It is enough for me here to state that I found the evil of

German vocal imperfection in its most mitigated form at Vienna. Whether the flimsy school of composers who have since reigned there, such as MM. Flotow, Balfe, Proch, Kucken, and Van Hoven, have done anything to ameliorate or further to exasperate the evil, so far as Austria is concerned—I am little able to say. Some idea, perhaps, of the present state of vocal art in Vienna may be formed, by comparing Mademoiselle Zerr (who is the most modern Viennese singer that has visited England) with Madame Persiani, Madame Sontag, Madame Cinti Damoreau, or our own Miss Louisa Pyne,—all of them singers, in style of voice and occupation, fit subjects of comparison with her. Let us leave such delicate matters.

Among the special musical attractions which Vienna possessed in 1844 (and happily still possesses in 1852) was the violin-playing of Herr Mayseder. This was a pleasure all the more choice because it has been rarely, if ever heard, except in the Austrian capital. In the joint character of *virtuoso* and composer, Herr Mayseder might have delighted Europe, as a Viotti and a De Beriot have done, with the fascination of a talent as elegant as it is indi-

vidual: had he not preferred that easier part and easier life of Art which belong to residence in a chosen place, among a chosen circle, to a wider chase of those dreams of rivalry, profit, and glory, which are rarely fulfilled, without a sufficient number of thorns being found in the crown. When I was in Vienna this exquisite artist might be heard playing a *solo* every night when a *ballet* was transacted by the elderly and bony crew, who in 1844 figured as Nymphs, Beauties, Graces, and Muses, at the *Kärnther Thor* Opera House. There was no great stimulus at such a time of year, and with such forms and gesticulations on the stage to accompany, for a *virtuoso* to play his best. No one except a German would have played carefully, even—or, perhaps, at all—under such circumstances. Yet those *solos* by Herr Mayseder are among the best exhibitions of their kind, that I ever enjoyed. The ease, the precision of accent—totally distinct from French piquancy or Italian intensity—the gamesome and delicate grace, and the sufficient exhibition of the violin thrown into them, were as delightful as the pleasantest scene in one of M. Auber's operas, or the most finely-finished and fantastically-decorated *aria* sung by a Cinti

Damoreau or a Sontag. The same attraction as belongs to high breeding, select and well-fancied diction, sweetness of voice and kind courtesy of demeanour in society (and who can resist them ?) attaches itself to music of this quality. And, as in the world, after our having on trust endured much violence and uncouthness, because they demand our admiration as signs of Genius, such amenities of manner become doubly welcome—so also in the study of Art, there comes a time at which the power of ugliness to charm, of emptiness to seem profound, and of that which is unintelligible to pass for idea, ends—and at which suavity, form, taste, and polish, acquire a value from the contrast, which they did not possess in our more credulous days of youthful high spirits and inexperienced faith.

How curious is it to observe that the *fear* of beauty has for the moment possessed one section of the world of lovers and students of Music, as completely as the *love* of beauty did in former years!—This, however, may be an inevitable disease through which at a certain stage all art must pass; and it remains for those who regard the visitation alike without dismay, or without much expectation of its immediate close, to set

forth and illustrate the folly as clearly and emphatically as they can. A school of painters who commenced with the resolution of getting rid both of form and colour, would start on canons quite as wise, as the school of so-called pioneers and discoverers, who are desirous of adding to the stores of Music, by the destruction of rhythm, melody, and executive brilliancy; and who would replace gifts and graces, which they contemptuously denounce as the "pleasures of sense," by the screams and spasms of nonsense, calling itself deep meaning.

To return to Herr Mayseder,—a historian of German violin-playing, or a lecturer on style in Music, might find it interesting and profitable to take him as the German point of departure for a comparison betwixt the spirit of the South, and the spirit of the North, in Music. The popular polish and brilliancy, not excluding grandeur in execution, which has been long ascribed to the Vienna players as a characteristic (and of which we have so perfect an example in Herr Thalberg), is not altogether an affair of mode, depending on the patronage of a Thun, Kinsky, Esterhazy, Metternich, or other noble amateur. It is like the vocal dispositions of the Italians, and the rhyth-

mical propensities of the French—an affair of organization. North Germany has not produced anything so warm, so impassioned, and withal so elegant, in executive music, as the violin-playing of Herr Ernst. The excellent solidity, intellectual pertinence, and masterly completeness of its artists as a group, distinguish them, in turn, no less honourably. But if we have power in the North, must we not go for beauty towards the South?—This, however, is a question to be asked, not an assertion to be made,—since, strangely enough, the farther North, in its Thorwaldsen, Lindblad, Andersen, Lind, Taglioni, has of late years been contributing a gift of art and of artists to the world, in which the charm has been more remarkable than the power, and the elegance than the expression.

But if we begin with speculation and comparison we may lose ourselves, not merely among the *auroras* and ice-wildernesses of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, but in that more universal land of fog and mist, from which pilgrims issue forth (if they ever do leave it) chilled and bewildered, rather than edified.—Once again, therefore, let us return to Herr Mayseder. Whatever be his place as a player, or his value as

a specimen or an illustration, it seems to me that he has not been sufficiently valued as a writer. No one would dream of comparing his violin *solos* with those of Dr. Spohr, or of Herr Molique, in point of solid composition. He has not the richness and continuity of symphonic resource which distinguish the author of "Faust" and "Jessonda." He is less quaintly clever than the capital concert-master from Stuttgart. Yet Herr Mayseder's *solos* must not be scorned as shallow—while they display an elegance and felicity of melody—graceful or grandiose, as may be required—which are not found in the violin music of the *Kapellmeister* of Cassel, his *duetts* for two violins excepted. Hackneyed as were Herr Mayseder's compositions some five and twenty years since, they still make part of the first-class violinist's repertory. There is nothing for the instrument fresher and more effective than his airs with variations, *Polonoises*, and *Rondos*. The themes of most of these have a style and a spirit, and the passages a natural and genial brilliancy, that raise them far above the worthless efforts of those who string together a few extravagant phrases, to exhibit such individual powers over the bow and strings

as they may have mastered.—Again, there is chamber-music by Herr Mayseder,—as for instance, his first and second pianoforte *Trios*, and his pianoforte *Sonatas* with violin in E flat major, and in E minor,—which is worthier, of its showy order, than most other music of the kind in existence. The works just named may be resorted to not only long after similar essays by Kalkbrenner, Pixis, and others, are forgotten—but they will outlive the oppressive pianoforte *Trios* and Duetts which Taubert and Lachner,—nay, even Spohr,—have deposited in the midst of the world of serious players, with as much solemnity and circumstance as if they contained fresh ideas and forms.—It should be remembered, lastly, that Herr Mayseder is a quartett player of the first class—trained under a *Gamaliel* no less eminent than the Herr Schuppanzigh by whom Beethoven's best quartetts were prepared and performed in Beethoven's presence. Of Herr Mayseder's quartett-playing, however (which of late years, has been restricted to a few private circles), I can only speak by report. The *solo* performances I heard, spoke too clearly to be misunderstood—warranting for him every good quality which taste, intelligence, sensitive-

ness of phrasing, and discretion in *tempo*, could bring to bear on classical music.

Another of the real delights of Vienna, was to hear Strauss setting his own public in motion.—It is true that I partook of this under heavy disadvantages. The ball at the *Sperl*, where I first found the Waltz-master at home, threw a light on the much admired popular gaieties of the Austrian capital, more powerful than pleasing.—There was good company at this ball; burgher family-parties of fathers and mothers—sons and daughters—a few persons of higher rank,—with several of those mournful groups of travelling English, who seem to have that fear of amusing themselves generally ascribed to us by Madame —— in the fulness of her *spirituel* spleen, because we would not accept her tortured reading of Beethoven's *adagios*.—Nor was Respectability afraid of dancing—since hardly had the "*Rosen ohne Dornen*" (then a novelty) struck up, before more than one head of a family, as well as youth and maid, was seen busily jigging round in that *two-in-a-bar* step, by which modern whim has agreed to dislocate and vulgarize the grace of the most graceful among all dancing mea-

sures. But in this not discreditable society, and at an early hour of the revels, the attraction of the night became not the new waltz—not the *Rebus*, with its hieroglyphics put forth by the Waltz-master, the guessing of which was to add to the pleasures of the entertainment—not even the supper-tables, though these were steadily beset, and solidly honoured—but the proceedings of a damsel, which, to say the least, were more Bacchanal than courtly.—Her dirty dress of blue crape was ripped and ragged, imperfectly clasped at the waist, and clinging with a desperate tightness below the shoulder—her hair in front plastered tightly on her forehead in an arch of little flat fish-hook curls, was carelessly twisted up behind, with a loose tail streaming on her coarse neck. Her cheek was red with something deeper than even the rouge, so profusely used by the Viennese ladies. Her voice was hoarse, her gestures were rudely violent as she dragged her partner round the circle in a style which with us would have cleared the ball-room—which in Paris, would have been presently moderated by the presence of a *sergent de police*. At the *Sperl*, her effronteries of aspect and behaviour seemed to be acceptable

rather than the reverse. Matrons and maids kept their place in the circle that surrounded the waltzers, just as if the most edifying of spectacles had been in process of gyration; and the men on whose arms they leaned—fathers and brothers—not sprightly young men who endure no such domestic incumbrances —not passing English boys, who plunge into everything that comes before them, fancying that "such is life"—these good family citizens of Vienna, I say, absolutely applauded this hardened creature as she rushed round;—their plaudits exciting her to fresh audacity, fresh frenzy, fresh exhibitions of demeanour for the instruction of their own "womenkind!"—The bad impression which this, my first taste of the far-famed gaiety of the light-hearted Viennese left on me, never utterly faded out of me, so long as I remained in the city. It was impossible to accept the exhibition as one wholly exceptional, or got up as an extra-relish for enterprising strangers.

Nevertheless,—hideous as was such a dance as this, and more hideous the heartiness with which it was accredited by the men, and the indifference with which it was beheld by the

women,—there was in the music, that strange mixture of pensiveness and inebriating spirit, but faintly represented in the ball-rooms of London and Paris, even by the same Strauss, when directing the same orchestra, and playing the same tunes, which makes me also remember the evening. The exquisite undulation of the triple *tempo* which no French orchestra can render*—full to the utmost fullness, yet not heavy—round and equal, yet still with a slight *propelling* accent—the precision and the pleasure among the players, and the unstudied quiet animation of the Waltz-master himself, made up an irresistible charm,—a case of that fascination by perfect concord, without any apparent mechanical weariness which long practice only can give:—a delicious example of some of the most luscious tones that happy orchestral combination can produce, called out in expression and enhance-

* On the other hand, no German band can play a *galoppe* with that piquancy and precipitancy, that metallic sharpness of accent, and sliding smoothness, which the spirit of that dance demands. These are among the nationalities beyond the power of any training to eradicate—among the niceties of distinction, in examining which, some certain and constant elements of style may be discerned, worth considering by all who care to go deep into the origin of Art.

ment of some of the most beautiful music of modern Europe.

Among the pedantries of musical connoisseurship, few are stranger than the one which will raise its eyebrows at my epithet. Dance-music has been treated by the select, much "as if it had never a soul to be saved"—much as if melody, which depends upon rhythm, were not originally obliged for most of its varieties of form, "to the mirth of feet," as Campion so fancifully called dancing The select are further too apt to forget how the *Giga*, the *Ciaconna*, the *Sarabanda*, the *Menuetto*, the *Polonoise*, the *Bourrèe*, have helped the composer in the days when Fancy was timid. Such an over-refinement, as rejects form, recurrence, and accent in Music, is one among those many indications of a taste only to be gratified by what is remote and excrescent, seeking from one art what another art must yield, which mark the present period. It is true that some of the melodies of Strauss were notoriously adaptations, or else were borrowed without acknowledgment from every source; from operas successful or unsuccessful—from street-ditties and *volkslieder*, dubbed vulgar until they had passed through the alembic and come

forth purified, voluptuously elegant, regally pompous, or sentimentally graceful. But every year's experience of Music, makes one less and less disposed to quarrel with plagiarism, so that the form and manner be not borrowed. We know what magnificent "pickers and stealers" were Handel and Rossini,—and if we are not importuned by the complaint of a tune wrested from its purpose and spoiled (which rarely happens in the waltzes of Strauss)—and if the melody enchants us by the delicious flow of its cadences and the lovely balance of its phrases, there is no need to question or to take exceptions.

Thus much as regards these sensual pleasures —but again, in point of art, there are many works to which the musical student might refer with less advantage, than to the waltzes of Strauss, supposing him to study them with regard to varieties of rhythm and accent. Certain critics, alike shrewd and limited, I am aware, maintain that in rhythm and accent lie our only hopes for future novelty in melody, and point to Herr Meyerbeer as a pioneer and an inventor in this interesting field of discovery. To point out how far I hold them wrong, could not be done

without entering on the whole wide question of musical decay; it is enough to guard against being misunderstood as one who shares empirical opinions, when I dwell on the waltzes of South Germany as containing *a truth* for future musicians to ponder—though *not the whole truth*.—It is admirable to observe in them, how the good effects of monotony are used, not abused—yet withal how large an amount of variety may be ensured, without bewilderment or disappointment for the listener. The manner in which silences, breathing-spaces, and like piquancies, can throw life into a movement, without its becoming fragmentary, might be studied advantageously by the symphonic composer. He might possibly draw thence some means of effect of a meaning and humour entirely opposite to those originated by the ancient masters of counterpoint, in the days when melody was but timidly developed. Besides the *con moto perpetuo* in which (to exemplify) Mendelssohn delighted, there is another and an entirely opposite treatment of climax—another and entirely opposite manner of setting forth idea: and this may be effected without concessions to the indolence of the present day, or to the queer

canon, that vivacity, taste, poetry, preclude the necessity of severe science. To be formless, no less than formal, the artist must not merely know how to think, but must have limitless command over the tones of utterance, and the alphabet of written language. This command comes not of *will*, but of *work*.

Justice to Strauss, as the best, perhaps, of the waltz-composers of South Germany, has yet another plea for its admiration. There is in his works that relish of nationality which must always bear its value, and demand its reward. How I wish that some competent person, some Borrow among the musicians, would write the story of the gipsy (or wild) music of Europe—would give us the birth, parentage, and education of the *patois* songs of Venice and Naples, and the philosophy (to put it primly) of the airs and graces which may be heard in the villages of Bohemia, and in the valleys of the Tyrol, and along the sides of the Styrian lakes. That many of the characteristic peculiarities of these are merely so many *village*-versions of city-tunes imperfectly caught up, and more imperfectly rendered, I have been long satisfied. Careless notation, which forgives *the flat*, or for-

gets to contradict *the sharp*, may engender a national twang. That untrained voices may help on the tune they cannot else get through by howls, twirls, and quaverings, which are utterly unlicensed, though by custom they take a certain queer form of their own, may be gathered by any one familiar with what English psalmody was, in remote country parishes, a quarter of a century since.*—I remember to have been much struck in one of London's by-ways, with a Styrian harper and violin-player, two of the most unkempt creatures that ever trudged through London streets,—playing, what for a while I thought was something curiously quaint and original, and stopped accordingly, to listen to. There were little indescribable twitters and trills, as odd as the chuckle of the Italian *teorbo*—a rhythm that seemed as if it were of seven or thirteen bars —and *such* chords—consecutive fifths and other abominations which I am not worthy to denounce!—I stood, much caught by so wild an

* To venture an illustration in a form of the coarsest extremity—which, however, may "point my meaning" in the direction I wish—has any vigilant London amateur been cool enough to note the curious calamities and changes, which can befall his most favourite Opera tune or English ballad at "the small hours" of a mid winter night, in the hands of "*The Waits?*—"

exhibition—till, as happened to *the Vicar* in the prison, the truth gradually began to dawn on my mind that I had "heard this learning before." One familiar phrase after another disentangled itself, till I made out the *bolero* in the overture to "Preciosa" and the exquisite airy dance (a positive *fountain-burst* of perpetual motion) from the same opera. They came out, both, as good as new—as strange as the strangest *Styrienne* which the travelling collector, if he can, greedily notes down as a specimen of national music.

To pursue my illustration yet a step further, let a born Swiss and a born Venetian sing the same tune—and the one, somehow, shall contrive to give it a smack of the hill-echo, and the other a touch of gondola-undulation, such as shall render the two versions as utterly different as the water at Vevay and at Venice. Let the tune become popular, and the respective *costumes* will so have grown over it, as utterly to disguise its identity.

This national humour, subtle, indescribable, but not to be mistaken by any one that has ever hearkened out for it, gives a peculiar

charm to the music of trained musicians, into which it penetrates. What an individuality radiating from *Mazurka* and *Polonoise*, may be traced in Chopin's music—even when that is the most vaporous, the most languid in its dreaming, the most sensually transcendental, as befitted one whose talent was at once developed and enervated in Paris, that hot-bed of sensual transcendentalism!—What a mixture of voluptuousness and spirit—of the hill-echo and the trumpet-call, and the merry *volkslied* with its burden, is there in the *valses* of the South Germans, when even they condescend to take a popular theme as text for a series of dance tunes!—I was never conscious of a keener pleasure from mere sensation — as distinct from the exercise of intellect, fancy, or enthusiasm—than while listening to these *valses* in Vienna, played lovingly to his loving subjects, by the very Emperor of the national dance.—And well can I believe what has been told me, that the funeral of Strauss, with thousands on thousands of people who followed his bier, and his unstrung violin laid upon the coffin, was as moving a sight as the streets of a great city have often to show;—because more sincere than many

a statelier pageant, where Vanity puts on the weeds of mourning.—It is no great glory to have been a hero among the thoughtless, inane, affectionate populace of Vienna—but Strauss, assuredly, was one in the days before the Revolutions of 1848.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEOPOLDSTADT THEATRE AND MOZART.

The Vienna faëry *extravaganzas* in their last days—"*Der Diamant des Geister Königs*" at the Leopoldstadt Theatre—Mozart's "*Zauberflöte*"—Beethoven's character of the opera—A commonplace solution of its mysteries—Mozart's beauties of sentiment greater than those of his comic humour—A word on his "*Figaro*"—A note on his "*Entführung*"—A few speculations on Mozart's genius in general—His universal reputation—Sentimentality distinguished from feeling—The conclusion.

For another of the far famed diversions of Vienna, we were just in time: or we may be said to have seen it in its dying state, rather than to have partaken of it. I allude to those faëry *extravaganzas* of Italian origin, which long made the theatres of the suburbs famous; and in which the Austrian *Harlequin*, *Columbine*, and *Pantaloon*, so many a day contrived to keep

the public alive, and to say and to do as many absurd things beyond the bounds of license as a paternal censorship could bear. I was one among some forty people who, in the Leopoldstadt Theatre, solemnly sat through "*Der Diamant des Geister Königs*"—which, once upon a time, had drawn thither thousands to applaud its broad pantaloonery and pleasant satire.

Sooth to say, the piece, in which the local jokes were lost on me, would have stirred speculation, more than broad mirth, had the theatre been crammed in place of being cavernously empty. It was noticeable, for instance, to observe what things the very same censorship that had allowed Liszt to play, but not to publish, the Rakoczy march (a Hungarian patriotic measure), that had dealt so mercilessly with some of the noble sentiments in Schiller's "Wallenstein" at the Court Theatre—allowed the *Pasquins* of the Leopoldstadt Theatre to present. We saw, amongst other noticeable things, a dull king, with a very dull court, and a very dull people; and when the king said "Laugh!"—the court laughed in a very dull fashion—but none among the audience.—We saw a *Prince Cœlebs* in search of a virtuous

damsel for a wife; aided in his researches by a Squire endowed with a miraculous omniscience, —who set aside one Austrian candidate after another, with an immediate and impertinent disdain, and who only allowed his royal master to "throw the handkerchief" when the English-woman—the prudish, awkward, ill-dressed respectable Englishwoman of the Continental stage—appeared. This might be all warrantable and real enough; but the show of it, and the lethargic acquiescence of the public, were odd, to say the least of them. A little more keenly relished seemed to be a hit against the pedantry and poverty of the north Germans, in retaliation of the heavy pleasantries against Austrian vacancy and stupidity, which were so constant a topic at the coffee-visit and supper-party of Berlin, as I had known it. It is hardly needful to say that in all this, there was nothing really merry, or spontaneous, or expressive of the lives, humours, wants of the Austrian people. The popular tunes with which the piece was sown, were plodded through mechanically, rather than sung with real animation. Lethargy and death were even then upon the theatre.

For such a place of entertainment, and to

please a livelier public that once waited on the sallies of *Kasperl*, it was, that Mozart wrote his "Zauberflöte." The mystery and mystification which seem, like a fate, to have hung about the last deeds and the last days of the composer—and to have been deepened rather than dispelled by those who had his memory in keeping, have bred no speculations odder than the doubts, fancies, and judgments which critics have thrown out concerning the meaning and the value of this same "Magic Flute."—How Germans, familiar with the popular taste of Vienna in its entertainments—familiar with the technical science of Mozart and his notorious disclaimers of any deep poetical introversion — familiar, too, with the character of Shikaneder, the idol of his theatre, who, for that theatre, wrote the book which his playfellow, Mozart, undertook to make music for—can have bewildered themselves to find some solemn allegorical inner meaning for the story, appears to me only accountable on the supposition that such Germans have preferred imaginary discoveries of the kind to the plain real historical truth. There must be a set pattern in all such faëry plays: an imprisoned lady—a faithful knight—a skilful squire—a stupid tyrant: but

why this combination, because it was dressed up anew to please an old public with Priests of *Isis*, Genii, a Spirit Queen, and ordeals to exhibit the machinist and scene-painter, &c. &c.,—should be gravely analysed as one whit more mystical than "the Barber of Seville," where the same threadbare personages of Comedy figure in a more practical *harlequinade* of intrigue, elopement, and matrimony—has always puzzled my comprehension. It seems to me as if no one connected with the making of the work, was capable of a mystical conception. It is true, that the old original fable whence all these personages and productions radiate, might, peradventure, be referred back to the dark ages of Myth and Mythology; but who can seriously dream that either playwright or musician ever, for an instant, troubled himself concerning the symbolism of ancient oriental fable?—the paternity of *Punch* as ascribable to the lost tribes?—the triumph of Faith as shadowed forth in the dark ages of Paganism,—or the reward of Innocence and Charity, in which human Love finds so sweet and welcome a vindication?

Further, some darkness has been thrown on "Die Zauberflöte" by the *dictum* so often

quoted of Beethoven, that this was Mozart's "one German Opera," in right (so runs the gloss) of the style and solidity of its music. Let it be believed that Beethoven did say such a thing; and the speech, I think, will be found to carry little weight, if tried by Common-sense and not by

Wonder with a foolish face of praise.

Like many another sensitive, rude, vigorous, original, impulsive and retired poet, Beethoven may,—nay, seems oftentimes to have been a mystifier without knowing it—to have thrown out judgments and confessions in the angry haste of paradox—and not always, before he spoke, to have come to an agreement with himself as to the convictions which he expressed. Poetical license includes poetical nonsense: and this is more largely vented by none, than by the solemn, the gloomy, the vehement; who, taking it for granted that they are above the comprehension of ordinary mortals, are apt theatrically to assume the oracular character, and to-day to deliver that which shall not correspond with the morrow's rhapsody. Hemmed in, as he was, betwixt patrons and parasites—violent physical

passions, and an ever-pressing physical disqualification—to me it always seems as if Beethoven, though he aspired loftily, thought deeply, and felt intensely, spoke, wrote, and acted theatrically. Though such speech and action be not really insincere, they have many influences and effects in common with insincerity. Rhapsody and paradox are a temptation besetting natures like his—a consequence of such trials as those that beset him. They are a crude, eccentric manifestation of man's desire for sympathy, since that may present itself as a resolution to startle, no less than as a determination to agree—which may be ascribed in part to cruel position, in part to the lawless and tyrannical propensities of an uncurbed and ill-regulated nature.

But whether or not such a reading of Beethoven's *dicta* on Music be generally warrantable, I think there are few who will in earnest accept and accredit his preference of the "Zauberflöte" as most the German in its style among Mozart's stage-works,—otherwise as his opera richest in musical expression, and containing the fewest concessions to the singers' foolish and arrogant love of display. Such praise might be given to Mozart's "Figaro" more fitly than to a work

on the one hand, containing such Vienna tunes as "*O cara armonia*," as the birdcatcher's ditty, as the nonsense duett "*Pa, pa*;" and, on the other, such airs of gratuitous display written for a singer of peculiar powers, as those allotted to the *Queen of Night*. It is true that in the music of the Temple Mozart rose to a high tone of solemn grandeur; but to this he had already proved himself equal in the graver portions of his "Idomeneo." It is true that everywhere is to be perceived the artist, in whom, with a perpetual flow of luscious and haunting melody, was combined a mastery over constructive science totally unparagoned, — that the musician and the man of sentiment, were too strong for the farcical and fantastic subject on which his good-nature had engaged him; but the outbreaks of religious spirit, and the exhibitions of recondite ingenuity (as in the accompanied *corale* for the two men in armour), which "Die Zauberflöte" contains, belong, I have always thought, not to the poem, but to Mozart. He delighted, betwixt sport and earnest, in technical exhibitions of science; while, as regards the apprehension of character or colour, rarely has a creator appeared more intensely steeped in personality than he.

In his very "Figaro," which is as music so incomparable, there is a voluptuous and impassioned elegance of tone,—a grace without comic vivacity—not existing in the comedy or characters of Beaumarchais.* In his "Cosi fan tutte,"

* The really gay stage-music of Mozart is almost entirely confined to his opera "Die Entführung."—There, however, it is exhibited with a vivacity, an impertinence, a breadth, a richness of colour that can never be sufficiently admired. While it is observable that in all his "airs of parade," Mozart followed the universal law, and improved and individualized his melody in each successive opera (some of his grandest single songs being in his "Titus") it may be also asserted, that he never equalled the humour, the brightness, and the sparkle, of certain passages in "Die Entführung." More excellent and characteristic comic music does not exist than the opening duet betwixt *Belmont* and *Osmin* (with the latter's stupid, surly ballad up among the apple-branches) — than the pompous air for the jealous old Turk, "*Solche hergelaufne Lauffen*" (mock dignity and importance, if there were ever such things)—than the *Terzetto* "*Marsch! Marsch!*" (in which science is effectively pressed into the service of Fancy)—than *Pedrillo's* merry drinking song "*Vivat Bachus!*" (which those curious in *tone* are invited to compare with the Bacchanalian music in "Don Juan")—than the explosion of *Blondine's* petulance in the final quartett of the second act,—where the incessant, unreasonable shrewishness of the waiting-maid disturbs the more sentimental suspense of the two lovers, with a comical contradiction, as importunate and tiresome as one of the "interruptions" in Miss Burney's novels.—Then, how capital are the Turkish choruses: so bright, so semi-savage, so perpetual, so melodious! The *prima donna* and the *primo tenore* are insipid enough: and here the concession of the creator to

which is throughout the broadest farce, the fickle ladies and their suspicious lovers sigh strains of deep and real tenderness which would become the high dames of crusading knights and their heroic consorts also.—*Fiordiligi* and *Guglielmo* might be another *Eloise* and *Abelard*. *Despina* herself moves nimbly, but is hardly gay. Thus those who, from the calm dignity of the sacred music in "Die Zauberflöte," have felt it incumbent on them to derive a grave solution for its story, I think have followed the instinct of their own proclivity to dream without rightly appreciating for what place and purpose the *extravaganza* was written, and by what manner of man it was set. If every note that Mozart wrote is lectured from, as explaining or expounding a subject, what will the transcendentalists make of such a phrase as this,

his executants tells with an oppressive influence on the permanent fame of his work: the diapason, too, in which the lady's airs are written is something of the acutest, but there is still in this opera, a soul of real mirth which quickens none other of Mozart's operas, and which justifies the liveliest regret that as a whole, taking the stage for what it is, "Die Entführung" is, perhaps, hardly any longer presentable.

what of other similar passages of cuckoo-*bravura* work which abound in the *Kyries* and *Benedictuses* of his services to the most supplicating of words, and at the most awful moments of the Roman Catholic mass?

It will be thought by many that too much has already been said in the above criticisms, derogatory to the renown of one whom the many have agreed to be the world's greatest musician—the few not dissenting. I know that I proceed at the risk of being considered pragmatical and eccentric for eccentricity's sake—of being rated among those worthless and troublesome cavillers who are tormented with the desire of deposing established divinities—I know that it is of little avail to protest that I do not pretend to say "the last word," concerning a master whom myriads have agreed to praise without reservation — but in spite of this, I feel as if I must offer a few remarks respecting Mozart and his genius—by the discussion of which, whether the ideas be denied or accepted, some service may be done to the world of Music.

There is probably no musician, living or dead, by whom the same general completeness of beauty has been exhibited as by the com-

poser of "Don Juan:" and perhaps no more exact parallel can be made, than the one which designates him the *Raphael* of his art. And thus the intense satisfaction that Mozart has ministered to every intelligence—lofty, mediocre, lowly—may by many be thought placed above examination and question; and thus examiners and inquirers may, by the very fact of their inquiry, be unfairly placed side by side with the group of strong and gnarled and gifted and perverse men, whose *pre*-Raphaelism in painting has become a by-word, and given a name to a school. Nevertheless, though perfect harmony and beauty command the largest congregation, and subdue the large proportion of the mixed intelligence and affectionate faith of the world (this without cant or hypocrisy on the part of true believers),—though, further, without an overruling feeling for Beauty, the imaginative arts can have small existence as arts—harmony is still not the only essential quality—beauty is still not the highest merit—because it may exist without the existence of commanding power, of brilliant genius, of fresh invention. And seeing that Mozart has enchanted rather than excited the world—seeing that he has provided for the

average sensations and sympathies of mankind, rather than enlarged the number of these or exalted their quality—it appears to me impossible entirely to subscribe to his supremacy as affording that *Alpha* and *Omega* of musical excellence, which the fond millions of his worshippers have delighted to ascribe to it.

To state the argument in another form, let me submit that in art, in literature—in all that concerns appeal to the sympathies by imagination—there are few confusions more frequently made than that of sentiment for feeling. We lean to the former because it soothes us, afflicts us with a pleasing pain, strews flowers above all corpses, presents the right emotion at the right moment—calling on us neither to scale terrible heights, nor to fathom perilous depths—while it in no respect shrinks from the extremes of ecstacy and despair. It is not merely the light of heart, the frivolous of character, the feeble in thought, whom sentiment satisfies, persuades, and fascinates. There are many of a graver, deeper nature, more cruelly afflicted in their own experiences, who object that Art should in any form mirror the secrets of their hearts: considering it in some sort as a holiday-land, a

place of healing repose, and of easy (not vacant) enjoyment—not as an arena in which the battle of life and suffering may be fought over again, merely by phantom combatants.

The perfection, then, of sentimental expression —more generally popular because less disturbing than the deepest feeling or the most poignant dramatic power—is the quality which has universally charmed the world in the music of Mozart, expressed as it is by him in a style where freedom and severity, Italian sweetness of vocal melody and German variety of instrumental science, are combined as they have never been before or since his time.—That he could rise above this level is as true, as that for the most part he *did not* rise above it.—The opening scene of "Don Juan," the recitative "*Don Ottavio son morto,*" the *stretto* to the *finale* in the first act, and the cemetery duett in that opera,—the "*Confutatis*" in the "Requiem,"—the pianoforte *fantasia* in C minor,—and the overture to the "Zauberflöte," among his instrumental writings—all instances of what I consider higher in tone than mere sentiment—will perhaps suffice to illustrate my distinction. In the generality of Mozart's works, however,

there is an evenness of beauty, an absence of excitement—dare I say, an inattention to characterization in drama—which leave something of vigour and variety to be desired. Within the circle of his Oratorios and *cantatas* (their respective musical epochs compared) Handel is more various than the composer of "Figaro" in his "Jupiter Symphony," his quartetts, his masses, and his pianoforte works. Haydn, in his instrumental works, has fresher inspirations—never any so voluptuous—many more frivolous (for Mozart was never frivolous, even when writing a waltz or a *quodlibet*)—but some more picturesque in their originality.—Gluck is grander and more impassioned in opera.—Beethoven, of course, flies many an arrow-flight beyond him in Symphony, *Sonata*, Quartett, and *Concerto*.—While no one who has done so much has done so generally well, there is no single work by Mozart in any style, than which some other single work having greater interest, by some other composer, could not be cited.—We can go backward from Mozart to Bach and Handel.—We can go forward from him to Beethoven.—We can condescend (if it please the purists so to state the case) from "Don

Juan" and "Figaro," to "Guillaume Tell" and "Il Barbiere;"—but some of us cannot return from any of these masters to Mozart without feeling as if some of the brightness so long thought incomparable had passed away from our divinity; that while, as a mingler of many powers he has no peer—if regarded either as a subduer, as an awakener, or as a charmer by mirth—there are separate stars of the first magnitude, larger than his star.

A philosophical biographer might possibly trace what I have ventured to describe as the character of Mozart's music, to his parentage and education. Though a mere way-side sketcher, I could not but imagine, while in Vienna, that the influences of Austrian rule on modes and manners, might also have had some share in deciding the cast and tone of his utterances. Of these influences I have next to offer a few impressions.

CHAPTER V.

AUSTRIAN INFLUENCES ON ART.

Ennui *versus* mirth in Vienna—Patient case of *espionage*—Tales of insecure life and property—Diversion for grown folk in the *Prater*—Romantic reading for the million—Strange torpor in a theatrical book-shop—The sum of these details discouraging—Death of Mozart betwixt sensuality and neglect—The cemetery at Währing—Beethoven's grave—A glance at his sufferings—A speculation on the tendency of Vienna influences—Enervation and exacerbation—A word or two on the subject of compensation.

It will be seen by the foregoing notes, that though little or no musical life, in my acceptation of the word, was to be found at Vienna, with the performances I did find there, I had no reason to be discontented,—allowing for the season of the year, the absence from town of most of the resident patrons of Music, and its natural consequence in the avoidance of any efforts at novelty in production. One thing, however, which

almost every tourist in turn had bid me to expect, was totally missing from the Austrian metropolis which I saw—namely, that lightness of heart which is said to be the companion of, and apology for emptiness of head. Preparations and materials for the diversion of the idle were on every side; but the idleness was more obvious than the diversion—the *ennui* than the mirth.

There is, perhaps, a fate in first impressions; yet they are not altogether to be distrusted. Entering the lines on the road from Nussdorf, the man who saluted our clean, talkative *Jehu*, with a leather-topped stick in his hand, was pointed out to me as belonging to the police. I had not slept a night in the Austrian capital, before another such civil-looking, middle-aged, tidily-dressed official was allotted to me, as guard of honour. He never accosted me—he never came very near me—but he never let me go out of his sight for ten minutes at a time. In the Cathedral which I loved to haunt, for the sake of the wonderful effects of light and shade, belonging to the morning mass in that dark building, when the sun glances on the silver altar, veiled by its incense-fumes—my quiet

friend was never missing. In the picture galleries, he was always some four or five Rubens' breadth distant from me; nay, when I went to pay a visit to a gentleman in the Chancellory whom I had known in London, he rested on the bench nearest to the door, till my call was paid, and when I moved on—he moved on too. It suited my curiosity to go to two theatres on the same evening—a thing which few save foreigners ever do, especially when at neither theatre a novelty is played. It suited my shadow to follow me.—Now, whereas the most affectionately intimate *espionage* applied to a traveller can only seriously annoy those who have anything to conceal, the compliment in question perpetually kept before my mind considerations of a certain order, not the most favourable to belief in the easy, unconscious enjoyment of the people among whom I was thrown. It is impossible to conceive truthfulness surviving among those who are liable, on the slightest possible argument, to be perpetually watched. I may, it is true, have paid for the blatant and ignorant rudeness of some English predecessor, who, fancying himself in search of information, began to seek, by holding a court of justice and abuse

on all that he saw and heard, with any passing stranger for audience. Such ill-advised and audacious censors, loud in proportion to their ignorance and insignificance, are unhappily not rare. But the wisdom of the mode of castigation and superintendence may be questioned; and one of its fruits, I fear, may be traced in a reputation of national untrustworthiness, which is painful to accept when it is fixed on a people so good-natured as the Viennese.

Another among my impressions of Vienna, was even less encouraging. This, too, might be a chance, not occurring every year—but I never was in any town, where so many gloomy tales of personal insecurity seemed to cluster round one. The mystery and caution of the Police, which draw, as it were, a veil before every offence and accident, do more to set imagination to work, than the most blood-thirsty and naked newspaper narrative, which exhibits every hideous detail of yesterday's crime or accident, on every meek and quiet citizen's breakfast-table. Warnings to avoid such a part of the city, after an early hour in the evening—misty half-finished tales of strangers who had suddenly disappeared, and of *razzias* in consequence made

by the authorities which had cleared Vienna of a couple of hundred known miscreants at one swoop—seemed to fall to our lot in unusual profusion. The narrations which would befit a by-way in the Abruzzi, or a lonely house on the Pontine Marshes, jarred on the ear in a metropolis to which we had been bidden to look as the *Palladium* of laughter-loving, eating and drinking security, the inhabitants of which, too, were prevented by Paternal Care from "dying on the morrow."

In the matter of laughter, even, when no such discords as the above were in the question, my fare by no means made good the experiences of former holiday-keepers. The world of Vienna, it is true, seemed to be perpetually out in the streets, and in the suburbs, and in the *Prater*—the female portion of it to get its rouge on at a very early hour in the morning—the male, to be singularly dapper in its dress. But there is such a thing as going abroad because one is "sated of home;" and to this truth the staircases of many a great London house on many a May midnight, will exhibit an abundance of tolerably stale illustrations.—Neither "stupid," nor "inane," were the epithets which

I should apply to the aspect of the Viennese whenever I saw them in numbers—but "used up" to the point of Parisian exhaustion, without having that Parisian *esprit* which can turn even cynicism into something wearing the semblance of individuality and entertainment.

For instance—in the gardens where music and beer flow, which every one frequents, and in which "true joys" (as the Prussian Princes said of Vauxhall) were thought "to abound"—I did not receive much idea of gaiety from the spectacle of fat, solitary elderly men,—beguiling the time with cup and ball, or with flinging a ring to catch a hook hanging out of a lion's mouth, or, if not able to pay for the use of these dainty devices, with trying to balance their umbrellas on their fingers. The festival of the *Madonna* fell on one of the days of our stay in Vienna:—and though dancing was not permitted by the Church, merry-go-rounds,—or as they called them, *carrousels*—might do their worst in the *Prater*, without any deadly sin.—We must have passed twenty, if one, on one afternoon's walk; all of them inclosed in solid wooden houses, all of them largely accustomed. But the solemnity with which they circulated, would have been canonical

in the penitential week of Lent. I could not see one eager, childish face—I did not hear one hearty laugh. It is true that we came upon an Amazonian dame or damsel, some six feet high, whose poppy red cheeks shone bright beneath the panoply of a wide-brimmed hat, and who sate on her wooden horse, according to the stage-notions of a throned queen, in an attitude of deliberate grandeur not to be put into words. The male bystanders of giraffes, ostriches, ounces, fiery dragons, &c., mostly smoked the pipe of meditation. One youth about twenty, with a *toilette* choice enough for any London ball-room, mounted on his high-mettled racer, was industriously jogging up and down, so as to make his ride excitingly real, with his *calumet* resting betwixt the wooden ears of his horse. Others took their places in company behind a mimic locomotive, which emitted volcanic noises, calculated to suggest ideas of explosion.—But all was done gravely: without the slightest show of joke or whimsy. How different was this from the humour of such merry crowds as I have loved to watch along the quays or on the little *tragnetti* at Venice; making their own fun out of the most elderly and wretched puppet-show, or the old

wrinkled monkey, as sad as *Simon Stylites*, on the top of his master's melancholy organ! Yet every one has heard that Venice is in decay—and has been incited to wail over the gaiety of the sea-city, as a spirit pressed out beneath the heel of Austrian occupation; whereas Vienna has no less universally passed for the palace and paradise of all thoughtless pleasures.

Rising no very arduous step in the scale of intellect, the same impressions of blankness, vacancy, and torpor, presented themselves.—The booksellers' windows were filled with dream-books, lottery-tables—and old romances with their grisly frontispieces of mailed champions, *Sabrinas* in their floating veils, ghosts in their shrouds, or skeletons without. One of these precious books, by the way, furnished matter for a day's earnest perusal, to one of the stalwart peasant men we saw on the Danube steamer, as we ascended the stream.—A new drama was one night produced at the *Burg Theater*, either Halm's "Zampiero" or "Ein weisses blatt" by Gutzkow, I forget which. Being prevented from seeing it I wished to buy the play—so I went into a professedly theatrical bookseller's shop, on the Graben, for that purpose, and asked for the book.

No one knew anything about it—"*What* did I please to want?"

The new play—the play that had been played the night before at the *Burg Theater*.

"Had there been a new play?"

A play bill being fished out, it appeared that such an event *had* happened.

I might as well have gone no further, but I inquired whether the new play was to be had in a printed form.

"They could not tell."

Would they find out for me?—would they inquire in the theatre?

"If I would come again to-morrow."—I called on three consecutive days with precisely the same satisfactory result: and till I reached Munich three weeks later, was unable to find out whether the new play had been yet published or not. The shopmen were not uncivil, I must add—only totally ignorant and lethargic.

I could lengthen this list of traits and details, which presented themselves unsought, during our stay in Vienna. Enough, however, I think, have been given, to explain how, while I was there, it seemed easy to understand the untimely

death of Mozart,—the neglect of the sepulchres of himself and of Gluck, and the harsh discontent which exacerbated Beethoven's life in its prime, and its decay.

Whether or not it be consolatory to believe that those existences are not always the most melancholy, which seem the saddest; some such belief will, at all events, be forced upon all who have had opportunity of studying closely the lives of persons of imagination so often wailed over by gazers at a distance. But, at best, few destinies seem to be sadder, than those of the two great masters of German music, who took up the art where Haydn had left it, and who died in the city of Haydn's adoption, under circumstances of peculiar melancholy.—Every touch and trait of the man Mozart that we possess, show him to have been by nature gifted, genial, cheerful. Ruinously educated—for what can be worse than an infancy and boyhood of prodigious exhibition?—he might still, it is just possible, have been retrieved to a tranquil manhood of steady and healthy labour, had his art stood better in Austria than it did — had not his habits vibrated betwixt his haunting the antechambers of the great in quest of capricious

patronage—and fagging for narrow-minded publishers, or wasting his genius in the service of tavern and masquerade companions. The sinews of his intellect and purpose had never been strengthened: his sensibilities had been forced and encouraged: his genius fed on stimulants. He was a child in the affairs of men: good-natured, cowardly, superstitious, and extravagant. He was unable, by his own showing, to render a reason for much that individualized his conceptions; he wrought with a facility as instinctive as the slightest of the Italian melodists. Yet I will never believe but that he was perplexed with forebodings and strivings,—with the struggles of a genius too fervid and impassioned for his frame to abide the strife—with an unexplained sense of vanity and vexation of spirit, and of powers not wrought up to their fullest capacity.—Surely to no such wants or weaknesses, felt or unfelt, was the state of morals or of society at Vienna calculated to administer. Plunged into a life of orgies, towards which he leaned—since how should one so educated have leaned *from* it?—the ceaseless wear and tear of dissipation and difficulty proved too much for his frame of body and mind.—Down he sank,

forlorn and exhausted, into the midst of the whirlpool, and its waves closed over him.

There was no being in Vienna without making a pilgrimage to Beethoven's grave. From the *Freyung* where I took vehicle, to the graveyard where he lies, is but a step.

I was put a little out of tune for such an excursion by the jovial face of my *Jehu*—"Where to, in Währing?" was his question, as he let down the step of the *fiacre*. "To the cemetery," was my simple answer: and I remembered an old German goblin-tale of two sedan-bearers, who were honoured with the same commission, after a masquerade, from a real skeleton; for my driver's astonished visage, with a little romantic colour, could have passed for theirs.—But it was a broad, shining, cloudless noon, and the interval betwixt the city and the fortifications is anti-poetical as most suburbs of capitals are.—The lines passed, a road bordered by acacia-trees leads to a height, from which the views on every side are most lovely.—The village was soon hurried through, and the cemetery reached. A little girl, the identical *Wilhelmine* of Southey's ballad, ran, knitting in hand, with a large prosperous-looking cat trot-

ting behind her, to show me the tomb. It stands hard by the monuments to the Chevalier Von Seyfried and to Schubert—and is a cheerful-looking white sarcophagus, having an obelisk ornamented with a gilt lyre, and a butterfly within a coiled serpent, for its only devices:—for its motto simply,

BEETHOVEN.

The taste of all this is quiet and good, if not exalted. But it is hard to express how the air of placidity, not to say, prosperity, belonging to that tomb, struck my imagination as curiously at variance with the youth, the life, and the death of the stormy being who sleeps there. Never was the dark and cureless unhappiness of his life so forcibly made present to me as by that contrast. It might be owing merely to the influences of Day and Noon, working by antipathy; but I never felt the weight of Beethoven's sorrow so gravely as in that place, where every object conspires to soothe the senses and to suggest the thought of

Honour, love, obedience, troops of friends

around the death-bed of the man of genius.

I thought of his early difficulties—not those

common-place and unimportant struggles to gain hearing and opportunity, which form a part of the class-education of every artist, essential to the free play of his faculties, and to that self-reliance without which no great work is achieved—but of the waking-up of a rugged temper and a suspicious spirit in the midst of impulses the most generous—in the midst of affections which lacerated their possessor in the shape of self-remorse, after those moods in which his dark angel got the ascendancy.—I thought, too, what must have been the peculiar terrors of slow-growing deafness to one of such a harsh, singular, intractable nature as his,—vexed by the misdeeds of rapacious and disreputable kindred, and aware that the sense essential to the delight of his existence, was dying out, day by day, sound by sound.—I thought how the struggles of Beethoven with his calamity, instead of converting it into a disguised blessing, resembled the ferocious strength and the aimless impotence of the writhings of an animal in torture. Like a child he tried to hide his malady, as if concealment could give him back consciousness of sound. Then came gloomy despondency—"rages," not like those of Byron's

childhood, "silent," but immoderate and brutal, striking right and left, and often heavily wounding those steady and considerate friends of whom, beyond all other men of genius, he stood in need.—Then came death, after a long time of disease—to a body worn with pain—to a mind haunted by ceaseless fears of want, and by cruel convictions that he was dying forsaken and ungratefully treated.

There was something of morbid distortion, something of moral obliquity, in the latter part of Beethoven's life. It has always seemed to me a miserable thing, that, with money in the bank, the friend of so many Austrian noblemen and Prussian princes should, almost *in formâ pauperis*, have sued a society of London music-makers for the benefaction, which was to provide him with food and fire—with a bed to die on, and a mass to be sung over him.—God forbid that we should lay this miserable thing at the door of Genius! God forbid still more that we should not be able to separate the diviner mind of the poet in his works from that which was gross, trivial, and melodramatic in the man! That is no real homage which writes lies on grave-stones:—which will not admit, which cannot allow, which

dare not forgive without denying all offence! There is enough, and more than enough, in the master-works of Beethoven, to place him among the inspired men who have appeared on the earth;—and the violence and paltriness which a calm examination of the facts of his life tends to disclose, howsoever at variance they be with the raptures of those who have draped him for a complete hero, and who have accepted all his sayings for oracles, do nothing to shake our affection for him in his art. We are certain, that there, all that was best, least mortal, and most spiritual, had a glorious and lofty utterance, the elevating influences of which will be felt by our children's children.

Granting his fierceness—granting even his falseness, if falseness there was—in Vienna, there seemed to me a ready explanation, if not absolution, for such melancholy discrepancy and short-coming.

The moral rot which, when I saw the city of his adoption, pervaded it to putrefaction, could hardly fail to have reached his mind—to have rendered his terrible trials so many arguments for fierce and sullen contest, not motives for his exercise of that vigorous

resignation which ends in binding underfoot the Great Despair. I cannot believe that it was deafness alone which rendered Beethoven niggardly, suspicious, harsh, and untruthful. It may have been also the mixture of flattery, folly, and falsehood, around him — it may have been in part consciousness of yielding to sensual fascination which was to be compensated for by a fierce and almost brutal self-assertion. The influences of perpetually breathing an atmosphere of untruthfulness (perfumed, as it were by fits, with the courtesies and blandishments of sensual good nature), have perhaps never been studied in the fulness of their variety, by morbid anatomists of character. That which shall enervate a Mozart with his genial temperament, his expansive nature, and his early experience of power to lavish and to receive pleasure, shall merely irritate a more rugged, less perfectly organized, less worldly, later-ripened humourist such as Beethoven; though while both may be conscious of the deleterious effect, neither shall have strength to deliver himself from it.

But while as concerns the interests of Art, we look with a keen eye on the defective morals

of Vienna—while we illustrate their corruption, and hollowness, and folly, from the sorrows of those endowed with a divine gift, who have nevertheless failed to live well and to die happily there; let us in vindication of humanity, no less earnestly dwell upon and rejoice in the great and good things which were given forth from Vienna, in spite of the poisons in its air—in spite of the canker at the very heart of its artistic life which so few, whether artist or amateur travellers, seem to me to have felt. What Mozart and Beethoven might have been under a more healthy dispensation—less frivolously kind, on the one hand, less heartlessly indifferent on the other—is shadowed forth by what they *were*, with all the disadvantages of Austria against them. Instead of being hireling buffoons at the beck of capricious aristocratic patronage, they were noble poets. They did something to raise the people of a city, poor and Circæan in its tone, towards higher sensations than those of mere animal pleasure. It may have been one of those compensations, the discernment of which, in proportion as Life advances, satisfies the weary to wait, and the indignant to be calm—that, into the midst of

a metropolis where intellect and scholarship have been so cruelly trammelled and oppressed, so brilliant a line of artists should have been dropped, for the rescue of its people from an utterly base and vacant life.—But this possibly is idle wandering—and, if not, assuredly small comfort could be found in the city of Vienna—as moralist, musician, or man of imagination has known it, during the years immediately preceding the revolutions of 1848.

CHAPTER VI.

SCHUBERT AND HIS MUSIC.

An original Austrian composer—Memoir of Schubert by Herr Bauernfeld—Salieri Schubert's instructor; his kindness—The pupil's resistance—His natural gift of melody—He becomes usher in a school—Is patronized by the Esterhazy family—His habits and manners—His death—The cemetery at Währing—His vocal compositions—His instrumental compositions—Why the latter are unsatisfactory—Schubert the last creative influence of Vienna.

WHETHER the theory of the influences of Austrian life and society upon the well-being and the well-doing of the musician and his art, indicated in the foregoing pages, be overstrained, or the reverse, it receives further illustration in the story of the last of the classical composers of Vienna, who lived, died, and was buried, comparatively unknown, in the midst of a world unworthy of him.—For a genius that—while Beethoven was existing, and where Rossini was reigning—could strike out a path for itself so original

as Schubert's, amounts to a phenomenon rare in the annals of Music, meriting kind entertainment in a city the music of which has been so long its boast. How far fortune followed desert, may be gathered from a brief memoir of Schubert by Herr Bauernfeld, on the leading facts contained in which we may dwell for a moment.

Francis Schubert was born in the Lichtenthal suburb of Vienna, on the last day of January, 1797. His father was in the humble circumstances of a schoolmaster; but the German instructor of boys must command some musical acquirement, and Father Schubert was able to teach Francis the rudiments of music and the violin, while an elder brother instructed the child on the pianoforte. By the time that Francis was eleven years of age, he had become known as possessor of a beautiful voice — received an appointment as chorister in the Royal Chapel, and was admitted as a pupil of the *Konvikts*—one of the many educational foundations, by aid of which Austria has avoided to educate her people. There was an orchestra in this college able to perform the symphonies of the German composers; and at the head of this band the boy was placed shortly after entering the school.

It seems that the boy Francis began to imagine and to write, as fast as he learned, music. Before he was eleven years of age, he had produced pianoforte pieces, *quartetts*, little songs,—a year or two later he wrote a *fantasia* for the Pianoforte, which his biographer specifies as (till that time) his most important work.—Some of these efforts were brought under the notice of Salieri, whose interest was excited on behalf of the youth. It is pleasant to read that the humanity of a *maestro* who has always laid under the stigma of having stood in Mozart's way—to the point even of his being wildly accused of having caused the administration of *aqua tofana* to the composer of "Don Juan"—should be vindicated by the interest he took in a young German composer; since Herr Bauernfeld, though sarcastic on the studies enjoined by Salieri (the scores of the elder Italian masters), does justice to the intention of his kindness. The youth is said to have wearied after a while of his patron's exercises as *rococo*, being excited and led away—who can wonder?—by the superior poetry and originality of Beethoven's works. He would be a German artist; forgetting that the principles of Art are

canonical, scientific in number and in beauty; referable to no country—though in Music, best exemplified in Italy; because there the science of counterpoint could be the most purely studied, in that simple four-part vocal writing, which preceded the orchestral complications matured and increased by German inventors. It might have been well for Schubert's general fame, had he lent a more patient ear to the formal counsels of Salieri.—Meanwhile, to the distaste of his orderly preceptor, whose ideas of words fit for music were possibly akin to those of his countryman, Metastasio—young Schubert flung himself on the verses of Goethe and Schiller, and tried, in his own way, to work them out, and to mate them with music.—The youth had the natural gift of vocal melody, and in spite of false lights and disturbing influences—for such indeed must be those of Beethoven if considered as a model—it cleft out a channel for itself—a form and a flow, not merely belonging to his country, but also peculiar to himself.—All this time the current of his life did not run propitiously for art. After leaving the seminary in which he had been placed, Schubert was compelled to go

home, and assist his father in keeping school.—He was wont, says Herr Bauernfeld, to boast of having shown great firmness as an usher. If this be true, I fear he may be credited with having expended all the discipline at his disposal on his pupils. We are further told, that such were the restricted circumstances of Schubert's boyhood and youth, that he was fifteen years old ere he entered a theatre. Yet we are informed that when he was nineteen, he applied for the place of a theatrical musical directorship at Laibach.

There are other contradictions not very easy to reconcile in Herr Bauernfeld's memoir. While in one paragraph we read that hackneyed jeremiade over the disregard shown by bystanders to Genius in its struggles, with which apologists think to make us forget the self-disregard of struggling genius—from another we learn that Schubert passed several summers at Szeleck in Hungary with a branch of the Esterhazy family. It may have been in his, as in Mozart's case, that a certain amount of aristocratic patronage did co-exist with substantial neglect;—but it may have been, too, that the younger musical *protegé* of the great

had those wilful and wayward ways which, however charming they be in *my Lord*, are not readily forgiven in *my Lord's* humble friend. In proportion as an aspirant tries to thrive by courtiership, he will sometimes disdain the subordination inevitable to a courtier — as though, by virtually insulting the prejudices and humours of those whose aid he invokes to advance his fortunes, he could assert his independence. Over all these sunken rocks Herr Bauernfeld's love for Schubert's genius has led him to fling a thousand shades, and mists, and gay colours. — Nor, in another point, will the biographer find it easy, from this memoir, to come at the simple truth. The songs of Schubert are described as on their production to have excited a lively sensation:—many of them were taken up by Herr Vogel, a singer in high repute, and by him "created," to use a French phrase, with great success.—This, however, can have hardly got beyond a *coterie* popularity in their composer's lifetime, or how should we have had to read of the miserable pittance for which they were sold in rich and joyous Vienna? Light is thrown on the matter by the testimony of Schubert's

contemporaries and comrades, from which something may be gathered concerning the predilection of the young Viennese for the pleasures of the tavern and the beer-cellar; and, as a consequence of these tastes and pleasures, the necessity of his hawking about his most exquisite compositions (like our George Morland) for ready money, no matter how miserable the sum. — In truth, as indeed may be inferred from the fine phrases of Herr Bauernfeld's defence of his behaviour, Schubert was something of a "rough diamond." He is said, in this Bauernfeld memoir, to have alienated Weber by offering criticisms on "Euryanthe" (that opera written for Vienna which seems to have been generally so roughly handled by the Viennese *maestri*), and Weber is accused of being "French and finical," because he was aggrieved by the younger man's honest opinion. We have elsewhere been used to read of Weber as the rude speaker among flatterers,—and of Weber's betters as having been "false and conventional" in their reception of *his* sincerities.—Thus perpetually do tales change their actors, while they keep their leading features and morals!

Whether or not, however, Schubert was bearish and arrogant in the matter,—whether or not his was generally a behaviour calculated to attract friends besides those who give their friends blank credit,—it seems obvious that his must have been a life visited by gleams and fancies of some ideal far above those ever attained by him. Fragments from his journals and letters are quoted by Herr Bauernfeld, giving tokens of thought, aspiration, elevation of taste and motive;—and though the Germans are portentous journalizers, there being hardly a *Johann* among them but who has his *stamm-buch* full of "mysterious and hieroglyphical sayings," there still appears to have been in Schubert something more strenuous, genuine, and real, than the mere tawdry sentiment, having nothing in common with honesty, feeling, and purpose (as we English understand them), that so many similar collections and selections reflect and register.

For to set against all this implied incompleteness of life, and this want of recognition, which in some respects implies want of desert, the remarkable industry of Schubert must be insisted upon, to his praise.—Though the man (in spite of Herr Bauernfeld's elaborate defences) seems

to have been somehow at odds with society—the musician was not indolent in cultivating his art to the best of his ability.—"He wrote," says the *memorandum* to which I am indebted, "about four hundred songs, and several *Cantatas* for particular occasions,—thirteen Operas and musical dramas (some of which are unfinished),—two *Melodramas*, six *Symphonies*, several *Masses*, a great number of *quartetts* for stringed instruments, pianoforte pieces, in the form of *quintett*, *quartett*, *trio*, *duett*, and *solo Sonata*,—part-songs, dance-music," &c., &c. Yet Schubert's career was not a long one, since after a period of doubtful health, beginning late in the autumn of 1828, he took to his bed on the 11th of November, and on the 17th "was gathered to his fathers." He was interred in the cemetery of Währing, and accompanied to the grave (Herr Bauernfeld adds) by a long procession of friends and admirers. Among the very last pieces of characteristic news which have arrived from Vienna, was a notice that some friendly and affectionate singers had celebrated his death-day, so lately as last year but one (1852), by singing part-music at the gate of the burial ground in which his kinsfolk had laid him.

A few words remain to be added regarding the compositions of Schubert.—It is possibly at once too late and too early, to range his songs in their right place among the world's musical treasures. Such an essay would, indeed, include an examination of the musician's art of song-writing. We must therein settle how far independence of, how far interdependence with, the poet may be carried by his coadjutor—and what are the uses, powers, and limits of accompaniment. We should further have to decide betwixt the Italian idea of vocal expression, as the last finish confided to the executant which must be wrought out by his voice from slender indications,—and the German resolution to reduce the vocalist to a slave.—We should next have to examine if that can be a poetical treatment of the poet's text, which admits every conceivable instrumental interruption, on the argument of stop, or breathing-place;—whether the spirit of the entire scene, person, or thought, is to be pictured and provided for, or the separate meaning of every word,—the latter a canon enjoining, for instance, that if "*a false love*," or "*death*" be mentioned ever so incidentally in the midst of the liveliest carol written for girl's voice,

the strain for a few notes or bars shall become gloomy, sinister, and discordant.—In short, the great battle of the schools must be settled, or pronounced (as it probably is) "a drawn battle," ere the exact height of the pedestal on which these remarkable works may stand, can be ascertained. It is certain that some among Schubert's songs, are liable to the objection of being pianoforte compositions with a voice part. In his "Erl König," the declamatory passages given to the singer would possess small significance, disconnected from the tremendous "*night ride*" of the accompaniment; and hence, that ballad becomes almost as effective, as a *lied ohne wörte*, when it is played on the pianoforte by Liszt, or on the violin by Ernst—as when it is declaimed as written, by a Schröder-Devrient, or an Adelaide Kemble.—Another illustration, though in a far more pleasing form, is to be found in the setting of the mournful song of Goethe's *Margaret* at her spinning-wheel—where, again, the ear is more wooed by the murmurous hum of the wheel, than moved by the woe of the singer. Nor can the above examples be defended as so many entire songs, save by connivance in the degradation of vocal melody to a

secondary place.* This, however, was not invariably Schubert's practice. His settings of Scott's "Ave Maria," and of Shakspeare's "Hark the lark,"—his "Post," his "Ungeduld," his "Ständchen," are but five among his many specimens of song in its perfect form, with the most natural disposition of parts. We remember all the five by what the voice utters, *not* by the pianoforte—by the charm on the ear, as much as by the strong words *italicised* and the

* This degradation once admitted, inevitably implies decline in Art, and thus affords comparison a point for its operations. Let us look at such among Handel's songs as are the strongest in character, colour, and situation; such, for instance, as the song of *Polyphemus*, "O ruddier than the cherry" ("Acis")—the song of *Semele*, "O sleep" ("Semele")—the song of *Pleasure*, "There the brisk sparkling nectar" ("Choice of Hercules")—or *Susanna's* scene, "If guiltless blood" ("Susanna")—or the lament in "Saul," "In sweetest harmony,"—or the entire music given to *Iphis*, *Jephtha's* daughter, in "Jephtha," and we shall find, that while none of these yield to any compositions extant in depth of feeling, richness of colour, and power to move, the depth, the richness, and the power, lie in the vocal part—inextricably associated with the words which the singer must deliver, and thus in their right and lawful place. In none of the specimens mentioned, could any new scoring deprive the noble and expressive, and pathetic melodies of their prominence. Therein, they are models for songs, and will remain such, however vast and various be the future developments of instrumental discovery.

weak ones weakly set. We feel in them the fresh, fascinating, impassioned melodist. We long to sing them, and to hear them sung—in place of merely putting up with the voice, as one among other means of execution. The accompaniment in all is pertinent, ingenious, and therein full of genius: but it is listened to as accompaniment, not as exposition.—What has befallen the German *lied* writers, who have followed in Schubert's wake, for want of some discrimination in their idolatry, and of some reference to fixed principles in their imitation of his manner, need hardly be told. Their grim, and dry, and far-fetched productions, without a single note of melody, full of threadbare pretension in the manner of clothing and setting them forth—with accompaniments well nigh as disagreeable to play as the vocal parts are to listen to—are legion in number; already on their way to the limbo of forgotten deformities.

On the other hand, the slighter and more tuneable melodies by Proch, Kücken, Kalliwoda, and Reissiger, and such other pleasing melodists,—among the most recent of which may be mentioned some graceful compositions by Dessauer and Esser—can neither singly establish

a reputation, nor collectively form a group of compositions, that will retain a place in future histories of German music.—Since the death of Schubert, there has been only one *lied*-writer who has made "a mark" of any vigour and individuality, and that was Mendelssohn; regarding whose deserts, I have not here to speak.

Setting aside the beautiful and peculiar songs in question, there is little music extant so provoking as the music of Schubert: at once so rich in fancy, so meritorious in respect of constructive ingenuity;—yet so unavailable, so incomplete, and so likely to remain till Doomsday, under the cloud of neglect and misunderstanding.—The public is more displeased by want of proportion than by want of invention. New ideas, indeed, if they be not well set, are more apt to annoy than to attract those who have found a groove in which their admiration can run smoothly. There is not one instrumental piece by Schubert, whether it be his *Symphony* in C major, his stringed *Quartett* in D minor, his two pianoforte *Trios*, his *Rondo* for pianoforte and violin, his pianoforte *Divertimenti* for four hands, or his pianoforte *solo Sonatas*, which does not contain first thoughts, phrases, and melodies,

on which Beethoven might have consented to work, having, moreover, a wild spirit and sweetness totally unborrowed.—There are in all of them grand strokes of bold modulation, strange dispositions of the instruments:—but all may be charged with a want of success, which cannot but be felt by the discriminating connoisseur; while it is not made amends for by admiration from the less thoughtful public.—Their failure in effect is as complete, with those who can, as with those who cannot judge. The former, indeed, may suffer with, and in fact, because of the latter. For let the calmest of critics, the one most gifted with the power of abstraction, say what he will, there is an influence in sympathy and antipathy neither to be denied nor altogether resisted. A solitary listener to the *finale* of Beethoven's C minor *Symphony*, would find himself in a far different state of warmth and enjoyment, from the same man, when he was one among eight hundred listeners. The impression of *ennui* "runs like wildfire:"—and on all musicians whose taste is in a healthy state, as distinguished from those who will pardon everything, so that it is unfamiliar, the instrumental music of Schubert is calculated to produce the impression of *ennui* and singularity.

combined. The drowsy amateur, gifted with mediocre powers of appreciation, cannot follow it from beginning to end, without trouble of close attention. The more mercurial and impatient hearer, who is excited by some boldly-marked or stirring phrase to hope for something new and picturesque beyond the ordinary, becomes blanked by long, weary passages of constructive *remplissage*, in which it would seem as if the composer had gone on simply because he did not know how to change the inspiration. This is a sad result, when, in addition to the amount of genius flawed, lost, buried, the amount of wasted time, energy, and labour, is considered; and when there is so little chance of any future generation changing the sentence passed by the present for a verdict more indulgent.

With Schubert may be almost said to have "gone out" the light of creative genius in Vienna, save under those slight manifestations which some will cavil at finding included by me in the chronicles of a city, where Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, successively flourished.—There are still great Austrian noblemen who give quartett-parties, and who present themselves as amateur composers—there is still ball, and theatre, and

symphonic, and garden-music; and up to 1848, there were still those gigantic winter performances of *Oratorios* in the Riding School, that, by reason of their scale, have commanded so much attraction in Europe.—The temples are still open,—the old gods are still in some degree worshipped,—but the old priests are gone, and there are no new ones to fill their places.

MUSIC IN THE RHINE LAND.

1844-5-6.

MUSIC IN THE RHINE LAND.

CHAPTER I.

RHINE SCENERY.

Rhine scenery and its influences—Altenahr—Walk to Laach—Sonnets in the Lower Eifel—Schloss Pyrmont—Schloss Elz—Down the Moselle—The spirit of the country in preparation for its music.

SOME of my most sunny musical days, have been those spent in the Rhine land.

It has now become, if not positively difficult, "uneasy" (as the Germans put it) to say a good word for the great river, and the district it traverses. Familiarity has bred contempt for the Drachenfels and Ehrenbreitstein and Loreley's rock and Bishop Hatto's tower. Yet the Rhine is not disenchanted, save to those whose exquisite dread of what is common-place and Cockney, merely proves that the poetry in their souls has a thin, second-hand existence. A Rhine steamer with its cookshop on board is a weary

conveyance to an out-worn Londoner in August,—a place of humiliation to such among us as would fain keep our vulgar and vacant countrymen at home.—The Rhine hotels, with their sleepless polyglott waiters, and banging doors, and jangling bells, offer small "rest to the sole of one's *mind*," betwixt July and October. But those who do not treat the river as a mere highway—persons who can bear to see the floating *caravanserais* crowded with people athirst for Switzerland or Italy or some place more distant and untrodden, ploughing and fuming their way up the rapid stream—and who are willing to loiter and to be left behind—will find a rich repayment in the Rhine-land wherever they choose to trace a stream up its valley, or to circuit the volcanic hills and *weinbergs*, which shut in the great river sometimes with too monotonous a closeness.—I know of no ruin more picturesque in shattered choir and broken cross—more solemn in its leafy seclusion at the foot of one of the Seven Hills—than the destroyed convent church at Heisterbach; within an afternoon's easy reach of Godesberg. There are few more varied walks than the walk from the Apollinarisberg, above Remagen, with its new church, in which

the modern *fresco* painters of Germany are trying to emulate Giotto at Padua and Luini at Saronno, across the hills and through the young woods and the vineyards to Ahrweiler, and thence up the Ahr to Altenahr.—A second and a third day filled with a succession of the most picturesque objects may be enjoyed by the pedestrian, if, after having slept at Altenahr, he will follow my example and strike across the country back towards the Rhine, making the deserted monastery and church, and the mysterious lake of Laach, his destination. Every three or four miles the pilgrim will unexpectedly plunge upon some solitary hamlet or handful of houses in the depths of a cornfield, so remote and lifeless, that the sound of wheel or saw, plied by the unseen cottager, becomes almost startling in the prime of the autumn morning.—Or he may overtake some little pilgrim-band of the hard-featured depressed-looking peasantry, singing their monotonous hymn and murmuring their prayers as they plod onwards "in lagging file." Or he will be stirred, as by the sound of a trumpet, again and again by the unexpected up-springing on the horizon of some pompous old castle or single tower, which he had fancied

he had left behind him hours ago. I recollect, in particular, one grand ruin, Schloss Olbrück, which seemed thus to mock and to meet us during a long morning, from the top of its commanding eminence, under every aspect of shine and gloom, with the blue back-ground of the distant Rhine hills behind it, and which only looked its last upon us, when, after traversing many miles of "rolling country," we approached the dim and ancient beech-wood that girdles the Lake and the Monastery, whither we were bound.—How fantastic and strange, again, is the loneliness and beauty of these! How "eerie" looks the diamond-clear water, with its reeds, its pebbles, and its richly-turfed banks, and that still complete building beside it—as vast and gorgeous as a palace with its oriental minarets and domes, but sepulchrally silent, even on the brightest autumn day. There is a small *wirthshaus* within the precincts of its orchard—and thither may chance to come (as I happen to know) a cargo of resolute Protestant English tourists, who shock the echoes of the forsaken *Basilica* with their sharp unsympathetic voices, and who may end by striking up an Olney hymn, with good hot Calvinistic zeal, thoroughly out of tune. These,

however, I should trust, are not very frequent *incubi*—and the dreamer or sketcher or rhymer, runs a fair chance of enjoying unmolested occupation of this forsaken place—at worst, being questioned by some huge sagacious and courteous hound, who, after a passing salutation, retreats deliberately to his lair under some one of the dark archways; having satisfied himself that the guest is not one of those who come under his suspicion or superintendence as warden.

The spirit of this whole enchanted district may be found in some of Lessing's designs,—such, for instance, as in his little picture of The Knight beside the well, which is in the Stadel Museum at Frankfort—or in a wilder drawing by him which I know, of a summer storm tearing the rebellious woods with its violence, and almost turning back two travellers who are bent on going over the hill past the watch-tower towards the plain. No where have I seen a land fuller of old-world romance and enjoyment and picture; and perhaps I may be forgiven, if into this slight introduction, I weave a verse or two, to show how fondly and deeply the sounds and sights of this delicious district have sunk into my memory, as among the most precious of my holiday recollections.

In the Lower Eifel.

PEASANTS NEAR HANNEBACH.

A louder drone than wild bee's moorland horn
  Comes o'er the hill through the calm morning air,
  As peasant women, muttering ceaseless prayer,
Plod toward the shrine where holy tear or thorn
Shall lift the load which maiden's heart hath borne,
  Or medicine the mother's sick despair,
  Who sees her life's one joy, her treasure rare,
Grave-ward by slow mysterious fever worn.
  Wherefore should I, in Reason's faith more wise,
Hear that dull murmur with a painful thrill?—
  O! not their homely worship I despise!
Nay, rather my distressful fears to still
  For those I love mine orisons arise,
And join the humble prayer that wends along the hill.

THE ABBEY OF LAACH.

Come, plunge with me through this green beechen wood;
  What wilt thou meet? Some jolly forester
  Erect beneath his freshly-slaughtered deer?—
Some sleeping Paladin, his destrier good
Tied to a tree the while?—perchance intrude
  On some blithe dance of Nymphs who revel here
  Because no step of prying man they fear—
So lone the haunt, so deep the solitude?—
  Nor huntsman, nor brave Knight, nor Dryad free,
But yon proud Abbey by the lake behold
  Silent as death, and strange as gramarye;
Yet mellow bells in yonder turrets tolled
When rich St. Bennet's monks, in days of old,
  Dozed out luxurious lives, beside this charmed sea.

THE LAKE.

All fairest things a faëry garland make
For this enchanted caldron on the hill.
The cistus spreads its gold—the wild pinks fill
The air with odours—soft wood-pigeons wake
The coy and timid echoes of the lake;
And all day long, the hum—minute and shrill—
Of dragon flies' gold wings is never still,
Where gravely chanted hymn was wont to break
The holy calm. O, on that bank to lie,
In the clear sunshine of an autumn day
Till Fancy, drunk with sweets, began to play
With time, and substance, and reality,
Watching to see the turrets melt away
Of that forsaken church—like pictures in the sky!

From Laach, the pedestrian will easily make his way to Münster Mayfeld, for night-quarters. For his third day's pleasure let him cross to the Elz brook with its wondrous, witch-like windings, and its two castles,—the ruin, Schloss Pyrmont, and the old house, Schloss Elz, so dear to sketchers and water-colourists.—From this, the walk is no less charming—down the shy capricious stream, and across it on stepping-stones, and in and out among forest scenery, perpetually varying in its glimpses and vistas and combinations,—to Moselkern on the Moselle. Here, if it so please the rambler, he may take

the steamer for Coblenz, have done with Nature, and go back to the *lieder-tafel* society, the stringed *quartett*, and the *harmonie musik*.

The above is only one among a hundred accessory yet unfamiliar episodes of a sojourn in the Rhine Land. The Moselle, the Lahn, the Nahe, perhaps, most of all, that lovely and little traversed river the Main, lead, all of them, to haunts of a varied and characteristic beauty, well worth the pilgrim's seeking out, and far too little sought. And those are poor recipients of Art, who care little for those holidays in the midst of Nature, which give a double zest to all creations of imagination and triumphs of intellect, by bracing the nerves, by opening the sympathy, by transporting mind and heart beyond their wonted routine. To me, at least, associations and recollections of this kind, have imparted a peculiar charm and character to all the music I have heard in the Rhine Land. That has been chiefly what may be called festival or exceptional music, thus harmonizing with the spirit of a district which I have found beautiful, joyous, and romantic in no ordinary degree, yet which may be called a land of passage rather than of sojourn.

CHAPTER II.

THE OPERA AT FRANKFORT, 1844.

CHERUBINI'S "MEDEA."

Glance at state of music in Bonn—In Düsseldorf—Mendelssohn's sojourn there, and its close—His attachment to the Rhine Land—His residence near Frankfort in 1844—Performance of Cherubini's "Medea" at the opera of Frankfort—A sketch of the opera, with its difficulties and beauties—Some notice of the execution—General remarks on Cherubini's genius.

SINCE the days when Mannheim possessed its court-chapel, formed by Stamitz, to which the Abbè Vogler was second master—and its musical circle so tempting as to make the young Mozart wish to settle there—the musical temptations of the Rhine Land have been floating rather than fixed,—unless Frankfort, with its opera and singing societies, and Offenbach, for the sake of Herr André's extensive publishing establishment, be included in the circle.

It is curious but true, that in a busy and thriving city like Cologne, the Opera has been always below mediocrity—that, in Beethoven's birthplace, the accomplished university-town of Bonn, the state of habitual stagnation has been long such as to puzzle all who fancied that in Germany, Music must be every where.—During a part of this century, it is true, musical life emanated from Herr Simrock's press there: but when I passed some weeks close to Bonn, at Godesberg, in the autumn of 1843, indifference and inactivity seemed to have come down upon it; and any new music, save some paltry local publication, was hard to find, because in small request there. Neither sun nor customer seemed often to visit the bare counting-room into which, during the three long mid-day hours devoted to dining, smoking and sleeping, the unadvised *fanatico* might have had some difficulty in forcing an entrance, still more in finding any one capable of giving him an intelligent answer, or of receiving a commission.

For a while, it is true, Düsseldorf had a chance of distinguishing itself in the annals of German music, as well as of German painting; since the town was the residence of Mendelssohn

during his first years of professional establishment; and it was at the Lower Rhine Musical Festival, held there at Whitsuntide in the year 1836, that "St. Paul" was produced—its production making that most difficult point in every artist's career, his *second step*.—Then the enterprising few who have committed themselves by prophetic enthusiasm look on with anxiety, while the safer many who dispute the existence of any new genius are maliciously eager to justify former indifference, or selfish exclusiveness, by proving the whole thing to have been a deception and mistake.—Some chill and canker of the kind, there was in the lower Rhine Land for Mendelssohn. He was thwarted, too, in the musical superintendence of the theatre, which had also been entrusted to him: and his Düsseldorf experiences may have been one of the many reasons, why,—singularly averse as he was to personal collision, and utterly incapable of opposing intrigue by intrigue,—he conceived that strong reluctance to theatrical production, which was only beginning, at the time of his death, to give way before the stronger desire of giving vent to thought, passion, and fancy, in the dramatic form. At

all events, weary of his experiment after a short trial, Mendelssohn left Düsseldorf as a resident: and the town relapsed into the nothingness and stagnation from which it may be long ere another like himself shall come to raise it.

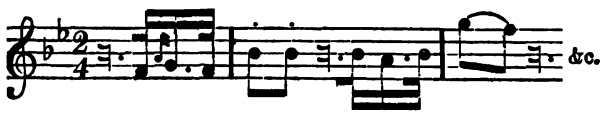
But though Mendelssohn, in leaving Düsseldorf, broke for ever what may be called his official relations with the Rhine Land, his love for the district was such, and his ties to it were so many, as to bring him thither again and again, as a willing sojourner.—It was among the church organs of the villages under the Taunus hills (the name of one "Liederbach," in particular, haunts my ear) that his six organ *Sonatas* were first tried, in the early autumn of 1844.—He was then sojourning at Soden, which little watering-place, though then not popularized by having, as now, its branch railway, was easily accessible from Frankfort;—and found it pleasant to go with the part-singing societies into the wood at Schwanheim,—while the opera-house of the Free Town was most comfortably obliging, and willing, for his pleasure, to perform any opera that he asked for, existing in its repertory.

This repertory was tolerably rich and wide, including such works as the "Unterbrochene Op-

ferfest" of Winter, the "Fernand Cortez" of Spontini, the "Idomeneo" of Mozart,—and (greatest rarity of all) the "Medea" of Cherubini. Though that fine composer, by birth Italian, has always been more thoroughly relished as a composer in Germany, than in his native country, or in the city of his adoption, Paris;—though his "Les Deux Journées" still keeps the stage there (an opera of which it seems impossible to procure a hearing in England), his greatest tragical drama in music, can hardly be said to exist anywhere. It was only retained on the Frankfort list possibly for the purpose of maintaining the dignified and classical character of the theatre. Seldom were the dignity and classicality of "Medea," I suspect, allowed a chance of vindicating themselves to the sprightly audience of men of business, and passing tourists, that attends the Frankfort theatre. And the performance of the opera, that I heard in August 1844, was notoriously a piece of complaisance on the part of Herr Guhr—then the musical director, to Dr. Mendelssohn—being in this respect, too, worthy of commemoration among the pleasant illustrations of artistic intercourse and courtesy in Germany.

I believe that no musician or amateur, who then heard Cherubini's "Medea" for the first time, left the Frankfort theatre, without enthusiastic admiration of the music, and without deep regret that an opera so sublime, should so soon have passed into the rank of those poems written in a dead language, which, though from time to time disinterred and interpreted for the benefit of the scholar, have no longer a popular existence or acceptance.

The music of "Medea," in obedience to the arrangement of the drama, is singular in construction. The opera might be objected to as one too largely made up of *solos* and duetts, were it not for the ingenuity with which the chorus is employed, to heighten and work up several of the movements, so as to conceal the monotony which else must have resulted from such a general want of complication.—After the wild and fiery overture in F minor, known to the frequenters of our classical concerts, the music commences with a chorus of the female attendants of *Dirce*, on a gracefully delicate *motivo*, and deliciously instrumented—the *viole* divided, and the bassoons supporting the second violins in the airy triplets with which they bear

up, and connect, as it were, the *disjecta membra* of a subject thus broken—

This is followed by an air of parade for the chosen bride of *Jason*, which, though brilliantly and buoyantly accompanied, is not effective, owing to the dryness and insufficient interest of the vocal part.—The grand March, which introduces *Creon* (the *basso*), *Jason* (the *tenor*), and the full chorus, is one of Cherubini's stateliest marches, almost approaching the stateliness of Handel. Its dignity and vigour will be best appreciated by comparing it with such a classical march as that by Spontini in "La Vestale." The *solo* of *Jason* addressed to *Dirce* is weak: what composer is there, indeed, who has been able to make the false lover in opera interesting?

There are few things, however, finer in music of any age, than the following *solo*, with chorus and principal voices, in which *Creon* invokes a blessing on the coming nuptials. Here, again, the orchestral portion is rich and sonorous in no common degree,—having that

well-nourished substance in its tenor, or central, part, which the modern race of effect-mongers too largely disdain; rising and swelling into a serene and noble grandeur, befitting a prayer, which was supposed to reach the divinities of Olympus on their thrones of "eternal tranquillity."—This *solo* offers almost the last moment of repose and happiness which is to be found in the opera.—The next scene abruptly introduces the Colchian sorceress, to upbraid and threaten, and in turn to be warned and menaced by *Creon*, who fancies that he has power strong enough to drive the evil influence forth. This is done in a piece of declamatory music, so full of force and judicial terror, that any mortal woman must quail before it, were she even among queens imperious as *Athalia's* self.—Not so, however, *Medea*, the sorceress-sovereign. She allows the storm to break on her head, but it does not bow or bend her. Retaining *Jason* when the rest are gone, she endeavours once again to cast her enchantments round him;—at first by the tale of her sorrow. Her air in F major, $\frac{3}{4}$, —virtually the *sortita* of the *prima donna*,—and a fine specimen of Cherubini's *cantabile* style, has still its singularities.—The abrupt cry,

not to call it jerk, on the word "*ingrat!*" which finishes many of the phrases,—and which unexpectedly starts out, simultaneously with the last notes of the closing symphony,—falls on English ears as one of those bit-by-bit settings of single words, which, however specious, are so false in point of art, when ever, as here, they interfere with the general spirit of the composition. But were this blemish fifty times as great as it is, it would be forgiven and forgotten for the sake of the duett (in E minor) betwixt *Medea* and *Jason*, "*Perfides ennemis*," which closes the first act—one of the most highly wrought and thoroughly sustained explosions of passion existing in opera. The vocal parts are in the most forceful declamatory style, grand and simple, generally broken—yet, where relief is needed, subsiding into large continuous phrases, as on the first introduction of the words—

"*O fatale toison!*"

The orchestra is treated with a fire, an amplitude, an ever-increasing animation and interest, the remembrance of which arrests the breath. The scene may be, perhaps, too long for the possibility of its being adequately supported by the pair who are in dialogue: but who can

wonder if the composer, conscious of such riches of resource, was seduced into excess? On considering it without reference to this practical difficulty, admiration is unbounded, and even with the faltering, exhausted *Medea* and *Jason* before us, whom the Frankfort Theatre afforded, the ear was so borne along, and the attention was so fascinated by that wondrous and brilliant orchestra, as to be incapable for the moment of cavil, question, or regret. The close of this first act of "Medea" is, I repeat, one of the marvels of music; almost in opera, what one of *Lear's* great scenes is in tragedy.

After such a scene, it was impossible to raise the excitement higher—difficult even to recommence. But the force and fervour of Cherubini throughout his "Medea" are remarkable. The instrumental introduction to the second act has an importance and a character which at once compel the ear to listen; and after three short scenes of spoken dialogue, comes the first of two further duetts, in which *Medea* entreats from *Creon* permission to tarry a while longer. To this some variety is given by fragments of dialogue and chorus being

skilfully inwrought, with an excellent courage; heightening the probability of the effect, and animating the scene. Next succeeds an *arietta* for *Néris*, the attendant of *Medea*, deliciously scored, yet felt to be an interruption rather than a repose—a fruitless lull in the storm, which is driving on with its current of wreck and ruin—however musically necessary, to give the principal singer a moment's breathing time. Then comes the last duett betwixt *Medea* and *Jason*, in which the tempest breaks out with a yet wilder fury than before. In this will be observed one of the earliest and finest specimens of the *tremolando*—that expedient since so vulgarized by misuse—here called into play to picture the fever of wretchedness, suspense, dismay, in the deserted *Medea*, and of cowardly shrinking in her false lover. As a whole, however, this duett can in no respect be said to surpass the duett of the first act, as was demanded by the sentiment and the situation. We are now at the grand bridal scene, which sets a seal on the wretched woman's agony. The important portion of this is the religious march and chorus to which the procession moves,—since the central slow movement, or

concerted piece, introduced according to canonical usage, is weak, save at the moment of interruption, when *Medea's* ejaculation*

"Ecoute aussi ma voix, Hymen, O Hyménée!"

reminds us that there is present at the banquet a *Fury* who has come thither unbidden. But the march is worthy of all honour and study. All that is known and conjectured of the Greek modes was obviously familiar to Cherubini, as must be felt in the unisonal choral hymn, "*Fils de Bacchus*," and in the ordinance of the instrumental strain which moves in antiphony, contrast, and lastly, in support of it. Those who are curious in the matter, will find much interest in comparing this movement with the Greek religious marches of Gluck. In them the sentiment of beauty is far stronger and sweeter. Cherubini is comparatively antique, remote—in some measure cold. I have heard this ingeniously accounted for on the hypothesis that the trouble in the rite caused by the presence of *Medea* had entered his mind—that he wished to paint the bridal torches

* This (strangely enough) is *spoken*: the orchestra alone giving the sinister contrast required.

dimmed, and the garlands withered, and the flutes and recorders turned to unconscious wailing, by the spell of her ill-boding presence. But to me this is a far-fetched solution—a theory made after the fact. These impressions of coming gloom and ruin should be projected (so to say) across the scene from *Medea's* self, but not mingle with it. Or if the voices of the singers should be afraid on seeing that pale witness of their praise and prayer, the hymn itself should have no fear. A right conception of the moment would vividly contrast the jubilation of the people and the pent-up wrath of the avenger,—not fuse them together. But this, again, as Sir Thomas Browne says, "is philosophy;" and the *rationale* of the character of this music, I imagine to lie in no such subtle distinctions and conceptions as the above considerations embrace, so much as in the individual nature of Cherubini, to which sweetness (as distinguished from *dryness*) seems to have been sparingly given. The impression of beauty produced by his works is, comparatively speaking, faint and rare; in Gluck's operas, it is everywhere. Yet the scene is, to the close of the act, of very high quality; and

the final burst with which *Medea* rushes to the altar, and snatches thence a blazing brand, besides being dramatically fine as carrying expectation forward, makes another of those declamatory moments of which this great part is only too full. When I saw it on the stage, it brought back to me those lines from Barry Cornwall's poem to Pasta—

> "Now thou art like some winged thing that cries
> Above some city, flaming fast to death."

There still remains the consummation of *Medea's* vengeance, the triumph of her power which tramples beneath its feet her own remorse, in its fiendish resolution to immolate and to destroy. This would seem to have been the favourite portion of the opera with its composer. The "death and wild despair" with which it is filled are "lengthened out" with a vengeance. The Storm-prelude with which it opens (one of the finest storms in music which exists — Beethoven's "Pastoral *Symphony*" not forgotten), has almost the development of a grand *overture*, occupying twenty pages of the score. From the time that *Medea* appears on the scene, in the midst

of this tumult of the elements, she is never again allowed to quit the stage. The remainder of the opera consists of two *scenas* for her, both on the grandest scale; the first with her children—the second as the triumphant *Nemesis*, dealing destruction round her. To point out all the noble passages with which these tremendous scenes are filled, and the manner in which the composer's inspiration was always present to himself, always equal to the moment, is not possible. The examples of declamatory music which they contain are only exceeded by Gluck, inasmuch as he could render force as violent, and frenzy as tempestuous, with a larger admixture of beauty. But, on the other hand, the instrumental portion has a *verve*, a variety, and a might, which, at the period when Gluck wrote, were undiscovered. There is nothing in Beethoven's "Fidelio" worthier of close study and fervent admiration. One hundred years hence it will remain to be as new as the organ-music of Bach, as the choral fugues of Handel, as the melodies of Mozart, are now. Perhaps, then, it may be like them resorted to as a frequent object of delight, comparsion, and instruction. The practicability of the work

may be then laid out of consideration, and the countless examples it contains of skill, grandeur, and freedom of vigour, may be relished and considered as they deserve.

Such being a few among the excellences of this noble work, — the one classical opera of more recent date than Gluck's, in which the grandeur of Gluck is approached—the universal avoidance, if not positive oblivion, into which it has fallen, are worth considering with reference to their causes. It cannot be said that "Medea" has passed from the stage, because of the world's resolution to have no more Grecian stories. Long after it had vanished thence, Simone Mayer's weaker music on the same fable, ill arranged enough, drew crowds to every opera house in Europe, to see the Colchian queen and sorceress presented by Pasta.* More lately still have we seen the life of old French classical tragedy asserted by Mademoiselle Rachel. Nay, to take the strongest and most conclusive instance possible, can it be forgotten, how when a translation of the "Antigone" was played a

* And what a presentation was that!—not to be adverted to by anyone professing to treat the musical drama, even as above (episodically and for the sake of illustration), without a word or two of

few years since in a London theatre, for the sole purpose of introducing Mendelssohn's choruses to the tragedy, which were then a novelty—

homage strong as sincerity can make it. There has never been any opera-singer in the memory of man so queenly as Pasta—so grandly measured and grandly brilliant in musical style—so loftily graceful, without affectation, in her demeanour. And this was of all her parts the most queenly: for in *Medea* she was doubly a sovereign—over the world of infernal spirits, as well as of subjugated human beings. Yet never was vengeful hate, arising out of passion the most consuming, if not the most tender, so vividly personified. When the Woman stood at the corner of the stage, watching the bridal scene betwixt *Jason* and *Creusa* proceeding, with her royal mantle haughtily folded round her superb arms, there was something of the *Medusa* in her port, and in her look. One *saw* the cauldron made ready for the poison! When later, the Mother, as well as the Lover, claimed her terrible place in her sacrifice of vengeance—when the children of the Sorceress were to die by her hand, because they were also, the children of the faithless mortal by whom she had been slighted—the fearful struggle of the scene, never excluded the grandeur of the great Princess, in whose breast it was raging. There was the terrible beauty of one of the *Fates* of old mythology, in the look and gesture with which Pasta used to hide the weapon of murder from herself, under her long floating hair, as she tottered across the stage to consummate her awful crime. I might fancy that the intense impression which these things have left on me, was a first symptom of that dotage which finds small pleasure except in pleasures which are gone, had I not recently seen instances of a like spirit, working its way in Opera, by means of physical powers and musical qualities totally different—but still as fervid, as ripe, as solid, and as subduing—in Madame Viardot Garcia.—1852.

though the music failed to please, owing to inefficient execution, the drama attracted delighted crowds, night after night, to witness its representation? For every genuine creation of which a reasonably good interpretation is possible, there is always, I firmly and increasingly believe, a public to be found: a public willing to allow for the taste of an olden time, to be patient with some tediousness, to show humility in accepting that which is strange. But Cherubini's "Medea" hardly comes within the circle of works thus described. It is an opera, of which the fair execution (as we now understand the word) is hardly possible.

I have never seen or heard on the stage an actress, who, supposing her to command the requisite tragical requisites for the part of *Medea*, had physical power to execute Cherubini's music—with the exception of Madame Stöckl Heinefetter, and (possibly) Mademoiselle Cruvelli. I am told by old German operagoers, that this *Medea* was one of Madame Milder's grand parts; but no one (not even Madame Schröder Devrient in her best day) seems precisely to have replaced Madame Milder. Even before the tremendous third

act commenced, the zealous young lady (Fräulein Neuther) to whom the part was allotted at Frankfort, sank into a state of utter impotent weariness, which, however justifiable, was totally fatal to the closing portion of the tragedy. From this there is no deliverance by strong will —none by the most exquisite musical culture. Once in a century may come a Catalani with a voice, as it were, like a clarion, and a frame made of adamant and gold, — of everything that is most enduring and precious,—capable of undergoing the strain and fatigue of such a long display of unmeasured emotion—but, after Catalani's compass and lungs are found, we must then ask for Pasta's grandeur of expression, and delicacy of reading, and statuesque sublimity of altitude, and withering scorn, and fearful vengeance, and maternal remorse—ere the creation of the musician can be rightly filled up. The charming songstress and capital actress* to whom the part of *Medea* was confided

* The publisher of the fine French edition of the score of "Medea" dedicated his work to this lady, who is described as having been the main support of the *Opéra Comique* of Paris at the close of the past and the commencement of the present century, during

on the production of that work at the *Opéra Comique* in Paris, in 1797—Madame Scio—died in the prime of her glory of a pulmonary affection, which, it has been said, was exasperated, if not brought on, by her singing in this very opera. It must be further owned, that the entire part is written most ungraciously for the voice—that besides its merciless length and demand upon the energies, it perpetually claims qualities which are not vocal;—in this how different from the music of Handel, of Gluck, of Mozart, of all the great Germans, in short, who have thoroughly

which period some of the best serious works of the best French writers were produced there,—ineligible for the *Grand Opéra*, merely because the recitative was spoken, and because they contained no *ballet*.—"Among the works," says M. Fétis, "which owed a part of their success to the talent of Madame Scio, were 'La Caverne,' 'Romeo et Juliette,' 'Telemaque,' 'Montano et Stéphanie,' 'Medée,' 'Léonore, ou l'Amour Conjugal,'" (the last being the story reset in Beethoven's "Fidelio").—"The pure and metallic quality of Madame Scio's voice," says the same authority, "her musical instinct, the expression of her singing, and her dramatic intelligence, made up, as a whole, one of the finest artists who had ever appeared at the *Opéra Comique*. The principal parts in the most important works were entrusted to her, and such was the perfection with which she sustained them, that none of the songstresses who attempted them afterwards, could abide the comparison."

understood the means which they have had to employ, and who have known that Greatness bends to its materials—does not break them! That a man who, like Cherubini, was born in Italy, and who had commenced his career not merely by patching Italian operas, but by composing in the modish Italian style, should have ever arrived at so murderous a disregard of his singers, seems at first sight curious.—Yet his is not a solitary phenomenon. A like cruelty to the voices (though less in its degree) may be complained of in Spontini's operas. The want of sweetness in the nature of the artist, which universal testimony ascribes to Cherubini, may have caused this want of concession and charm in his music; and if it rendered himself moody, sarcastic, unsympathising with the young and harsh among his contemporaries, it has done him the greater wrong of interposing a fatal barrier betwixt his great and magnificent ideas, and the world that is in no wise averse to anything great or magnificent.

It was sad, I repeat, on leaving the Frankfort opera-house—after an evening so signally to be marked with a white stone in the calendar of holidays—to be satisfied that there were few reasonable

chances of ever hearing Cherubini's "Medea" again, and fewer chances still of ever hearing it executed in anything like accordance with the power and poetry of the composer.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEETHOVEN-FESTIVAL AT BONN, 1845.

Dr. Liszt's reputation in Germany—Some character of him as a player, an artist, and a man—His sojourn in the Rhine-Land —Serenade at Mayence—Talk of a Beethoven statue at Bonn —Dr. Liszt's engagement to complete it—Jealousy and indifference on the occasion—Want of a suitable locality—The *Fest-Halle*— The *Festival* — Journey to Cologne — The aspect of Bonn—The dinners at "the Star." — Dona Lola Montes—The visit of the Queen of England to Germany— Her arrival at Bruhl—The serenade given to her there—A word about "Harmony-Music"—The inauguration of Beethoven's statue in the *Dom-Platz*—Procession to the Minster— Odd costumes—The subsequent ceremonies in the open air— The illuminations at night—Artistic jealousies—The offence taken by M. E——, of Paris.

IT was about the year 1839, that a stir began to be made in Europe by the tour of one of the greatest pianists that ever lived: whose genius, however, has been manifested more remarkably without, than within, the circles of strict and

orderly art. I need hardly name Dr. Liszt. There have been few things in executive music in any respect comparable to his public career, which may be here spoken of, because it is understood to have closed so far as exhibition is concerned, and to be merged in enterprises of creative and critical activity. Brilliant in his wit, extravagant in his habits of life and opinion, courted for his personal fascination by every one who is greatest in rank and choicest in intellect, as Dr. Liszt has been, from his prodigious youth upward,—the fine judgment and the firm resolution which have enabled him to see that there is a time for every thing—a time to give up exhibition, and to enter upon more meditative pursuits—to cease from display at the moment when his popularity was the highest, when no rival was in hearing—I may say more, in being—such a whim of wisdom (if whim it be) must be commemorated as among the most remarkable passages and traits of his remarkable life and character.

At the time I refer to, on the continent of Europe Dr. Liszt commanded the whole world of gentle and simple listeners as no other instrumentalist ever commanded it before him. For such

love and personal regard as he inspired, must not be confounded with the wonderment and curiosity that follow an eccentric like Paganini. Whereas the great Italian violin-player was a gloomy and hypochondriacal egotist, inapt and ill at ease in society, penurious in his personal habits, giving most reluctantly, and in rare spasms,—Liszt seemed to live for every distinguished man and every beautiful woman, and with every joyous thing—to have wit to spare for every one, and kindliness to lavish upon *too* many ;—since, well-a-day ! potentates so accessible as he are sure to be pressed upon by the scum, as well as by the salt, of the earth. While he appeared to come to his music as a sport, a *hors d'œuvre*, a light pastime, he made of his music an engine of beneficence more princely, in proportion to its gains, than Art has ever seen.

That such a character, however dazzling—that such a position, however delicious—are not the highest which an artist can claim, and should aspire to, is a truth past controversy. There is a munificence which lays waste and troubles, as much as it fertilizes and aids—which resolves itself into the gratification of glorious and affectionate and poetical impulses, without care for

the consequences. But in days of selfish and grasping agitation like ours, we must not too curiously arraign such over-profusion, when we know it to be accompanied by those smaller virtues and graces—that gentleness to the humble—that memory of small services—that noble superiority to anything like pique or littleness, to which every one can bear testimony who has known Dr. Liszt through a series of years. The wonder is, that a prodigious childhood, succeeded by a prodigious adolescence, passed in such a *Pandemonium* as Paris, have left so much of the man, so much of the friend, so much of the affectionate heart, so much of the fine appreciation of persons widely differing from himself, as Dr. Liszt enjoys, and makes others enjoy. There are people in whose cases it is idle to compare, to lecture—whom it is worse than idle to imitate—yet to whom one's whole heart goes out, in recognition of the treasury of rich gifts and gracious sympathies, which they retain and distribute in spite of every strange and disturbing influence;—and Dr. Liszt is of the number.

There was hardly, in 1845, an artist for whom he had not played—whom he had not helped. One day, when I first sojourned in the Rhine

Land, he was down in Cologne, "giving his penny" (to use his own phrase) in aid of the fund for the works at the Cathedral;—the next, toiling across the country (and German posting *was* then still a toil) to contribute his astounding "Hexameron" *fantasia*, and his "Tarentelles," and his "Galoppe Infernale," to the sober establishment of a *gymnasium* at Dortmund;—or assisting, with all his generous heart and might and energy, in shaping a career for a young English songstress, against whom chance for a moment seemed to have barred most openings at home;—or lavishing a concert on some miserable Italian piece of pantaloonery on two legs, who could sing a very little, and could make him laugh by magpie wit, and impudence, and knavery.—No wonder that for such a wondrous and fascinating man (of whom, to boot, Rumour had its good store of romances to tell), dear, sentimental German girls wore bracelets made of the pianoforte strings which he broke in his frenzy!—No wonder that serenades, and torch processions, and wreaths of flowers on his desk, and every conceivable gift that German taste can devise, seemed to spring up wherever he went—that poor scholars limped on sore feet a

score of miles to look at him, that dames of High Transparency "flung themselves at his head."—I shall not soon forget a lovely autumn evening at Mayence, with the full harvest moon looking down into the quiet and brimming Rhine, when the military bands from Castel came across the bridge, and, establishing themselves beneath Liszt's window at the *Hotel de Rhin*, treated him to such a serenade as no money could buy in England. The picturesque light on the parti-coloured uniforms—the hearty delight of the players over a few bottles of Rhine wine, sent out to them—the glory and spirit of the open-air music below (one piece being an overture for wind-instruments by Mendelssohn little known in England)—and the wit and cordiality in the balcony, where Liszt stood, looking at once *blasé* and sarcastic, and touched by a homage so totally unexpected;—such sights and impressions were with him of daily and nightly occurrence. The years of man's life to which they belong pass like dreams, or the vapours from wine, or else a *Methusaleh's* age would be too short for the mere retrospect of a period so brilliant, so crowded, so joyous, so noisy—with all its magic scenes and strange transformations.

But quieter folk who have caught glimpses at such a career, have good matter for many a rainy day's "recollection," when the time shall come for them at which nothing is found comparable to "the times that have been!"

And then, as a player, Liszt rises up above his mates as something of a different genius, a different race, a different world, to every one else who has handled the piano. He is not to be considered among the great composers also pianists—who have merely treated their instrument as an interpreting medium;—but as a Poet who executively employed the piano as his means of utterance and materials for creation. In mere mechanical skill, after every one else has ended, Liszt had still something to add—he could carry every man's discovery further: could exhibit it in new forms. If he was surpassed by Thalberg in richness of sound, he surpassed Thalberg by a variety of tone of which the redoubtable and equable Viennese player never dreamed. He had his delicate, and light, and freakish moods (as when playing the "Ständchen" of Schubert, or his transcripts of the *Tarentellas* and *Calascionate* of Naples) in which he may be remembered as another Chopin for

every quality of fancy, sentiment, and faëry brilliancy which made Chopin so delicious. In sweep of hand and rapidity of finger — in fire and in fineness of execution—in the power over those exquisite momentary fancies and graceful touches which, when the music admits it, add so much to its charm—in a memory so vast and comprehensive as to seem almost superhuman—in a lightning quickness of view, enabling him to penetrate instantaneously the meaning of a new composition, and to light it up properly with its own inner spirit (some touches of his own brilliancy added)—in a mastery, complete, spontaneous, enjoying and giving enjoyment, over every style and every school of music—all those who have ever heard Liszt frequently, will join with me in saying he was unapproached among executant instrumentalists.

The above are a few of the characteristics of the next distinguished artist after Mendelssohn, whose name will be remembered as connected with music in the Rhine Land. He, too, in a way widely different from Mendelssohn, loved the district with its cheerful towns and old ruins, and joyous vineyards; he, too, caught its spirit; he, too, had his dream of settling

there for life. He was to buy a faëry island, on which a palace of Art was to be built.—He, too, had his own part in the works at Cologne Cathedral, to which he had been a munificent contributor; and in the progress of his sojourn under the Seven Hills, and of his travels to and fro, another strong interest more immediately appealing to a musician, began to rise on him, which, with one who welcomes sensations so eagerly, and adopts interests so warmly,—presently became a purpose, a passion, and a duty.

It may be some dozen years ago or thereabouts that the musicians and amateurs of Germany began to fancy that a statue of Beethoven, in Beethoven's birth-place, would be a creditable object. And, accordingly, they came together, and opened a subscription; planned, and spoke, and clinked glasses, and sang; making some small progress in preparation. Then the idea was allowed to doze, after the fashion of Germany. For the enthusiasm of that many-sided, and many-coloured, and many-peopled land, holds "moveable feasts." It is apt to ebb, to abate, to dry up in one channel, when any new one, offering more charming opportunities of self-illustration—to wit, of planning, speaking, clink-

ing glasses, and singing—shall open itself. In what manner, or by whom the eager beginning, and the slack continuation, of the scheme were brought before Liszt, I cannot tell. Enough that he asked what had been done, and why matters "dragged their slow length along," and on being told that want of funds was the hindrance, he announced his intention of making up the *deficit* single-handed, out of the profits of concerts to be given. *Not* strange to say, the enthusiasts, glad to be rid of the responsibility, accepted his offer with acclamation,—for acclamation is perhaps the most cheap and comfortable exercise of generous feeling which can be made. Not strange to add, Liszt kept his word. His concerts were given; the money was handed over to the committee; the commission for the statue was entrusted to Herr Hähnel, of Dresden; and the inauguration festival was appointed for the month of August, 1845.

It seemed as if it had been fated, that, from first to last, in the arrangement of this *Apotheosis*, there should be trouble, jealousy, intrigue, indifference, and ill-report. It was found by those who had stood by and done nothing, that Liszt was put too forward in the business; and

hence, certain great musicians, averse to taking any but the principal part, utterly refused to co-operate in, or be present at, the Festival. Then came the visit of our Queen and the Prince Consort to Germany, still further to traverse all engagements, to turn all heads, and to give all recusant singers—averse, like the *maestri*, to self-effacement—an excuse for not singing music which offered them small opportunity for shining, save by self-effacement.—Further, when the *programme* was somehow or other drawn out —the valuable assistance of Dr. Spohr, as joint conductor with Liszt, secured—the form of the ceremonial, and the pieces of music to be executed, determined upon — a difficulty, which would have been foreseen anywhere save in *Gotham* city, suddenly sprang up to confront and to confound all who desired that the Festival should succeed.—In the middle of July, it was discovered, for the first time, that Bonn had no room in which the musical performances could take place. One expedient after another was recommended—one fusty room after another proposed, with those anxious promises "that it should be made to look handsome," which say so much to the experienced. Luckily, how-

ever, Liszt had a voice in the matter. "We must have a room built on purpose," said he. "And where is the money to come from? Who is to pay for it?" replied the wise men of Bonn, in amazement at so dashing a proposal. "I will, if the Festival fails," was Liszt's answer.

Such an "*I will*" as this, of course, silences all further objection. By good fortune, Bonn is only now one hour distant from Cologne; and the latter city, in Herr *Baumeister* Zwirner (the head architect of the new works at the Cathedral), possesses a master-spirit, at once experienced, energetic, and having a staff of competent workmen under his command.—A waste plot of garden ground in a suitable situation was at once pitched upon; the trees were grubbed up; the earth was levelled; timber was fished up out of one of the great Rhine rafts; decorations were made at Cologne; and the *Fest-Halle* rose like a palace in a faëry tale. In such temporary buildings, I have often thought the Germans expend their entire stock of taste. Assuredly never did concert-room answer its purpose better: few have ever been so thoroughly picturesque. The *Fest-Halle* was an oblong apartment, nearly three hundred feet in

length, with a nave defined by two rows of fourteen arches each. The roof, with its timbers displayed in the old fashion, was tinted a pale blue: the beam-work was liberally festooned with those rich garlands of oak leaves which one sees no where else save in Germany. Up the pillars, which were so many fir-trees merely trimmed—not shaped and planed—ivy had been trained: the walls were hung with a cool pale-red paper, the effect of which, seen from a distance, and in such quantity, was almost that of a warm and delicately-tinted marble.—As might have been expected, the resonance of the edifice thus constructed was entirely satisfactory.

But this magically-erected building was not to be reached without something of adventure. For an adventure it was, to travel from Ostend to Cologne, on the 9th of August, 1845. The trials of patience which await the average summer tourist on that most intolerable and worst managed of railroads—the heat, the dust, the pressure in uneasy carriages—the stupid incivility of the Belgian officials, the more stupid formality of the Prussian custom-house officers on the frontier—the confusions of many trains from many places meeting at given points, and few, if any,

keeping their time—all these pleasant incidents of travel were doubled in the vivacity of their interest, by their taking place (as it were) in the midst of a fair kept by half the literary men, artistic ladies, and great personages of London, Paris, and the holy Roman empire.—To make that day's journey was very like running the gauntlet for a seat in a railway carriage, in the midst of every body whom one had ever seen or heard of. Here might be encountered a group of swan-like English ladies, bending, and bowing, and waiting, and all but left behind because of their politeness, in the midst of whom a well known anonymous *bel esprit* stood enjoying the confusion.—There, in the plenitude of ministerial importance, and that touching simplicity which may sometimes be confounded with cool self assertion, a foreign cabinet Councillor and diplomatist was seen carrying his own red box in order that he might have the pleasure of studying publicly in the railway carriage, the rough draft of a Constitution which the aforesaid red box contained.—Next would come up, shouting, gesticulating, astoundingly dressed (and some of them esquiring not very dubious gentlewomen), a troop and tribe of bearded Frenchmen, who

were going through the journey with the violence of people to whom any journey, save from Paris to Versailles, was strange. What cigar-smoking was there!—what perpetual introducing!—what screams of surprise when there was nothing to astonish, and of recognition among people who had parted but the evening before!—The railway platform at Verviers was that day as fine a place for studying the full meaning of the word "*tapage*" as the holiday world has ever presented. As we drew nearer and nearer to Aix, the crowd grew thicker and thicker, more noisy, and worse tempered. Some of us had to rough it for a stage or two on the steps of the railway carriages; some with laps, by Nature meant to hold only one tenant, were cajoled into accommodating two and a half!—Some (chiefly French these) had lost their passports, or had come without.—And then we had a perpetual incoming and outpouring of the anxious, overworked, distracted officials, set in busy motion by the expected coming of our Queen of England, and the arrival of her Cousin of Prussia at the small palace of Brühl, half way betwixt Cologne and Bonn, to give her welcome to Germany. One or two of the station-houses had already half

got into their finery: in many of the tunnels, we rushed by mysterious avenues of green boughs, brought thither to be illuminated when our Sovereign Lady should pass.

I think I never met so many brass instruments—horns, trumpets, *cornets-à-piston*, trombones, *ophicleides*, *saxophones*, and other engines of musical festivity—on a journey, as on that railroad on that day. Even "the Star" at Bonn, swarming like a hive as it was, and all night long as noisy as the stage behind the scenes on the first night of a new pantomime—with its two, three, four, for aught I know, twenty bedded rooms—seemed a harbour of placid calm and gentle repose, after that frantic day on the Belgian and Prussian railroads.

As to the little dull University town itself, the best description of its aspect in the morning when we woke and walked out, was that furnished by an ingenious guest, who proposed to buy a view of the place, and paint it across with blue, scarlet, and white lines, on a green ground.—The buildings were positively covered with flags streaming in the wind, over walls of oak and alder boughs; many of the houses,

being profusely decorated with rich green garlands; among others, of course, the house where Beethoven was born, a forlorn and grim mansion in the *Rhein Gasse*, the dirt of which looked all the drearier for the furbishing-up. In cradle less fragrant did Genius never see the light. How curious was the illustration of that undying and universal fame, which becomes a fashion with the frivolous, as well as a faith with the sincere, furnished by the stream of pilgrims from almost every country, who thought it part of the show to go and look at Beethoven's birth-place—some with sarcasm, some with tears, the best with silence!—This done, the generality of the guests turned into the *Fest-Halle*, to be present at the rehearsal. Of the music performed there, it may be best to speak separately.

After the rehearsal, creature-comforts were to be cared for:—and those wonderful dinners at "The Star" for four hundred and fifty people, made too important a feature in the week to be forgotten. Two mortal hours and a half long at the least, and managed with a military discipline and exactness that was over-awing by its precision, they live in my memory as among

the most singular and pleasant meals of which I ever partook.—It will not do to think of the companion in all his prime of life and intelligence and promise and enjoyment,—whose ready sympathy and quiet humour gave a zest to every oddity, and a solution for every inconvenience, and an additional goodness of good cheer to the ample provision made for that monstrous party!—He is gone: but forms too vivid a presence in that strange scene to be wholly passed over.—I fancy that I now hear the wranglings of the guests as they fought their way to their places,—the screaming mirth of Dona Lola Montes (who had then not bethought herself of "Bavaria" and was only doing a little promiscuous gambling up and down the Rhine, wherever there was an assemblage of company).—I think I see the observant face of the English divine, who having walked demurely round the table where she sat, ascertained that *Time* had already "thinned her flowing hair," and mentioned the baldness when he came back as a precious fact to be noted.—I think I see the gigantic baskets, piled with cannon-balls of reserve bread—in quantity, enough to stand a siege—which somehow, ere the tenth course

came, were utterly emptied.—I think I hear the peremptory bell, which, as every new course was ready, called out the army of waiters, who returning anon in quick step, charged the tables with some fresh, unspeakable dish; for which, somehow, every one found room (how we *did* eat in the Rhine Land!) I think I hear how the scene grew noisier and noisier as the banquet went on:—and how there were greetings from far and near, at the top and bottom of the table, from lungs of every country, and the clinking of glasses, and the explosion of champagne corks; and, in progress of time, the bursting out of smoke in a hundred places, accompanied by a sudden scraping of chairs as our outraged island ladies made their retreat.—Will there be ever such days—ever such dinners again?—Of course, I believe *not:* but, in truth, they were mad and strange and noisy and long enough—and, what was wonderful, all the dishes at them were kept tolerably hot!

It was a relief to get out of Bonn, for a morning hour, and to hear the wind roaring among the old fir-trees on the *Kreuzberg* hill,—and, skirting the ridge of which it forms the last, to refresh the spirits with the delicious view from

Godesberg up the Rhine towards the Seven Mountains,—one of the finest landscapes in that lovely and cheerful district. But, after such a lull, the storm set in with a vengeance. Every train and steamer brought its cargo of new acquaintances or new celebrities — every hour its fresh rumour concerning, not merely the Festival, but also the Royal Progress of Her Majesty our Queen, and the gorgeous and cordial welcome which was in store for her. — Now it was to be an illumination *a giorno* of the Cathedral at Cologne.—Now it was the unparalleled concerts in preparation at Stolzenfels on the Rhine. — Now it was a serenade to be given on her reception at Brühl; which may be called a frontier-house belonging to His Majesty the King of Prussia, half way betwixt Cologne and Bonn.

This we were resolved to hear: and it proved well worth the hearing and the waiting for —though the waiting proved something of the weariest.—The scramble to reach the point of attraction was no easy business in a land where railway administration is generally slack, formal, and tedious; and where, betwixt the curiosity of sight-seeing and the unprecedented influx of

passengers, the poor, ill-trained officials had utterly, it seemed, lost their wits. After we had arrived at Brühl, we had three mortal hours of pacing to and fro in front of the palace—of watching the troops gradually mustered and marshalled, and of keeping up talk to keep off weariness—happy they whose party was as well provided with material as ours! Some of us, however, had reached that exhausted state which is not far from sullen ill-humour, when at last the painful screech of the steam-whistle, the frantic hurrying of the crowd towards the railway-station, and the sudden getting into order of the troops on duty, made it evident that the Guest was at hand: and a few seconds afterwards the train from Cologne darted in sight, and stopped. Then, those wondrous, shabby old equipages that had been so long in waiting (vehicles in which one could fancy riding only such potentates as the *Queen of Hearts* with her flower, and the *King of Spades* with his knightly falchion) floundered and plunged their way back to the Palace, with their precious freight. Next one might hear a sound reminding one of those announcing sunrise in the country—a sudden solitary flute or

clarionet trying its voice, and then suddenly stilled: next (for it was now blue summer twilight) a hundred Chinese lanterns ranged within the *facade* of the heavy old palace, which is in a form like this, ┌┐, burst into full glow. The windows of the grand apartments were seen to open, — forms passed and paused, — and the serenade began, played by four hundred wind instruments and one hundred drums.

I have never heard any thing so pompous as that sound. Some piece it was, I think, by Herr Wiprecht, a renowned Prussian band-master, which was first played, with an introduction of slow chords, spreading, and rising, and increasing in volume, till the old poetical phrase of "filling the sky" bade fair to be realized.—Our own "Rule Britannia," too, was given with every conceivable glory, save that nationality which not even a Prussian band-master can inspire into his myrmidons. That which our unisonal chant of charity-children in St. Paul's, London, did by Haydn, this serenade at Brühl did by me—produced the strongest emotion of nervous pleasure which I have ever experienced from Music; an emotion that drew tears, when assuredly there was nothing

either in the scene or the serenade to cause weeping.

Whence comes such a strong physical effect as this?

It would be interesting were some profound and poetical analysist to aid us in considering why the sound of military—or, as the Germans call it, *harmony*—music,—should so often be intensely, lusciously melancholy; even when the strain is the proudest and most triumphant. This can be no result of association, but a specific effect operated on the nerves—since it can be produced by examples as wide apart in character as the slow movement to the "Freischütz" *Overture*—as that dread yet brilliant burst of sound with which, in Weber's *Overture* to "The Ruler of the Spirits," the second subject is enunciated when it is repeated for the second time—as the *trio* of the *menuetto* in Beethoven's A major *Symphony*—as (to return to my immediate subject) those rapid and animated "*pas redoubles*," or "defile marches," with which the superb band assembled at Brühl made the court of that little shabby old palace ring and re-echo. The theory of inherent sadness, or the reverse, in certain musical sounds or keys, is hardly a safe

one. A bassoon, dreariest of ghostly drones, when employed by a Meyerbeer in the cloister scene of "Robert le Diable," to accompany the unhallowed resurrection of the frail sisters of *St. Rosalie*—shall become a humorous, nay, almost a brisk heightener of some scene of boor's mirth, if it be rightly taken in hand by another composer. Handel in his *Dead Marches*—particularly that fine one in "Samson"—shall evoke deeper and grander solemnity through the medium of a common major key, than Spohr can do when, for expression's sake, he uses five, six, or seven flats minor! Possibly no theory is to be given for effects so totally disproportioned to their causes; but the masters of Music have found them by instinct, and have known where to give the last enhancement of pleasure to their most festive compositions, by mellow tints and pensive glories, such as are analogous (if Fancy may be allowed a flight) to the splendours of the burning west at evening—how magnificent, how rich,—but how tender, also, and how sad!*

* * * * *

* It is possible that I may have a reader or two to whom the above may seem something more than mere rhapsody—striking the chord of sympathies which they may have felt, without

To get back to Bonn that night was as strong a disenchantment from all such high-flown delights as if *Mephistopheles* had planned it. Fortunate were those who did get back to Bonn: since, in the confusion of the hour, there were some hundreds who, in spite of explanatory screams, oaths, protestations, and directions, were whisked off to the city of the Three Kings instead of their real resting place.—It was long past "the small hours" before "The Star" went to bed—to be up, as is the custom with German hotels, little after day-dawn.

Exhausting as were all these sights, sounds, and screams, coming in such rapid succession, they, nevertheless, had the effect of sufficiently working us up into a due state of excitement for what might be called the consummation of this Festival—the inauguration of the statue of Beethoven in the *Dom Platz*.—The day began with service in the Minster, at which Beethoven's

expressing them. I could go a step further in such company, and ask them whether certain descriptive passages in our imaginative literature have not also produced in them the same sort of powerful and delicious trouble, bearing no reference to the scene described?—such an one, for instance, as the description of *Queen Elizabeth's* arrival at Kenilworth in Scott's romance, which is as grand after its kind as that Brühl Serenade.

Mass in C, I am told, was finely performed. But my enjoyment was in the scene without, watching the procession which swept across the *Dom Platz*—a sight such as could not be matched on any other occasion, or in any other country; since not only was it precious and interesting to overlook such a vast gathering of musical celebrities, to see filing past one remarkable man after another whose face bore tokens of thought, labour, and grave participation in the object of the meeting—but something was to be gathered from the fillings-up of the *cortège*. The German loves dressing up on all occasions, but the German student especially. His every-day protest in favour of Freedom meant (in those days at least) liberty to wear his hair half down his back, and his shirt (if shirt there was) open, so as to show his naked chest down to the waist;—to indulge in coats of the most caricatured fashion—caps the like of which no brother in smoke and beer had ever dreamed of—a cane, or cudgel, no less rudely and curiously devised—and a pipe bedecked with the portrait of some *Cynthia* tipsily enamelled in all her seductions.—But this was a state occasion, to be honoured as such in all the triumph of masquerade; and we had

barrel caps with dirty feathers, such as may be seen on *Romeo* outside the booth at a fair; and velvet Van Dyck coats, and scarves of all manner of gay colours, paraded on wearers whose fervour was only equalled by their want of cleanliness. The obese, and the sullen, and the spectacled youths that swept into the Minster, truly satisfied with such a precious caparison as I have described, are another feature of that curious meeting not to be forgotten.—The procession was closed by a troop of Lancers.—At last it wound its way into the Minster, and the doors were shut; and there was half an hour of comparative quiet, and time to breathe — if breathe one could on one of the most oppressively hot mornings of August, that the oldest Rhinelander remembered.

Tennyson has told us how charming it is to listen to music—

> "where the sunshine laves
> The lawn by some cathedral."

Even the gradual putting together of the crowd in the *Dom Platz* did not wholly hinder a part of the noblest Catholic service in existence from reaching the platform which had been raised round the statue for the accommodation of

the spectators. With this interest by way of aid, the time did not seem long. In front of the veiled statue were the female choristers (mostly amateurs), who had given their services to the Festival:—behind them were the tenors and basses. A reading desk stood on one side of the area, and ranged round the pedestal was a rifle troop, with their pieces loaded; for the Germans must have the baptism of fire on such occasions. One space after another, betwixt the dwarf linden-trees that are ranged in the *Platz*, filled rapidly with groups of eager gazers; presently, too, the company from the Minster poured forth. It appeared strange that the musicians were not kept more together, in order that they might form a distinct feature on the occasion; but betwixt bad management on the part of the Committee, and ill-judged self-importance on the part of the guests, it seemed, alas! as if the musicians had come to Bonn for the express purpose of keeping asunder one from the other. Then, a neighbouring balcony, flounced and furbelowed for the reception of royal guests, was a great counter attraction to the veiled statue. Time passed:—twelve o'clock approached, and the company began to grow restless. At length,

the screech of the steam-whistle on the neighbouring railroad, and the jangling of the loud and heavy-toned bells, announced that the royal guests had arrived. Almost instantly they appeared in the draperied balcony, and proceedings commenced. A brief address was read by Dr. Breidenstein, the chairman of the Committee, from the desk I have mentioned; and then, amid the thunder of cannon, a *salvo* from the riflemen, the pealing of bells, and the cheering of the multitude, the veil fell from around the statue. This was one of the moments of which life has not many, meagre of interest and theatrical as it may seem in description.—Many hearts were very full; but amid all the crowding memories and emotions of the scene, some will not forget the expression of Liszt's countenance as he went up to the monument,—the first, as was fitting, after one or two town authorities,—and signed the record of the transaction. I think that an expression so nobly and serenely radiant I have never seen on any face. While the signing went on, a chorus was sung; but, as happens with most open-air choruses, the effect was poor —indeed, the music passed unnoticed in the midst of stronger excitement. And there, at

last, stood Beethoven—the rugged, afflicted, storm-beaten genius,—placed royally in the town of his birth, by the munificent exertions of another musician, in the presence of a company such as there is small probability of any of this generation ever seeing assembled again.

And there, in spite of all the gibing, and soreness, and scornfulness of the time, will he stand, unless a fit of iconoclasm should break forth; unless the Germans, like the French, amuse themselves with pulling down the effigies they themselves have set up!—It was one of the odd inconsistencies of this singular Festival, that at night, when the whole town was garlanded and illuminated, that dark bronze effigy was left to stand, in the shade of the Cathedral, without bough, or leaf, or light,—dusky and grim. Were we to read accidents symbolically, such an end to the day of Beethoven's *apotheosis* might perhaps be felt as not the least significant part of the show. Enough that on the evening in question, the crowd was everywhere else, and the Effigy left in darkness!

In sketching the outward features of this commemoration, before venturing a few remembrances of its purely artistic portion—the music

performed—I must again insist, little to the credit of musicians though it be, that the seamy side of artistic life has rarely been so clearly and so coarsely manifest as at that Bonn Festival.—It appeared as if some of the guests had come thither with no other purpose than to see the matter fail, and to sneer at the universal discomfiture. A. would not sing. B. (which was almost more annoying) *would* play. C. wrote anonymous letters to apprise every one that D. was of character too infamous to be allowed part or share in so sacred a rite. Every one seemed to have set his or her heart on accompanying "Adelaida!" Then what business had Liszt to permit his own *Cantata* to be performed, when E. had his psalm ready, and F. his Hymn of Praise, and G. his choral *symphony* as good as Beethoven's, and twice as difficult? Then H. and F. and I. were spirited away by Meyerbeer, who was accused of fixing the rehearsals for the King of Prussia's concerts at Brühl and Stolzenfels, at the precise time best calculated to thwart the operations of the Bonn Committee.—Then the wranglings for place and precedence at the dinner-tables at "The Star" every day!—and the sneers and the slanders, and the confidences in by-corners, and

the stoppages on the stairs to relate some new hope of an utter break down—some new story of ill-usage and neglect. It was the plague of Envy, called into open and active life by mismanagement, in its fullest perfection!

Meanwhile, there were smaller farces played off in corners by obscure folk, while the great comedy of bitterness went smoothly on among the great artists. The French guests, in particular, awkwardly fell in with the humour of the time, and the spirit of the occasion. They had come thither with "their wives and their concubines," and they were very clamorous; but somehow or other their company and their clamour were felt to be of no vital importance to the solemnity, and their uneasy irritability took the oddest forms conceivable. One Parisian professor — in those days as vehemently loyal to Louis Philippe, as he subsequently became warmly laudatory of the Red Republic—was particularly wrathful in Liszt's room after the banquet, which closed the festivities with a scene of brawl, and noise, and confusion never to be forgotten.—At this the health of the King of Prussia had been drunk, and like honours had been paid to our Queen—

as the two Royal personages who had witnessed the inauguration. By this M. E—— felt his loyalty outraged. His blood was up. Silence would be a shame and a cowardice! "It was an insult," screamed he—"an insult to the great French nation, the omission of the name of the King of the French—an insult of which notice ought to be taken, and of which *he* would take notice!"—for then M. E—— wielded the thunder of a small French newspaper. "Why," continued M. E——, waxing fiercer at the diversion of the one Englishman present,—"why were no honours to be paid to Louis Philippe, if the Queen of England's health was to be made a toast of?"—"Why," replied the Englishman, "were none paid to the Emperor of China, or the Cham of Tartary? They, too, had not been present at the ceremony, and they had as little right to be forgotten as *M. le Roi Citoyen.*"

A word in season may be found sharp, sometimes, as well as soothing. My countryman's cool reply raised a laugh from every one, save poor M. E——, whose rage and gesticulation flamed up to hurricane pitch. He tramped up and down the little room like a Malay. He abused the Bonn Committee, he abused Liszt,

he abused the King of Prussia and the Queen of England—he abused everybody, the company in presence not excepted;—before he had done, I think he had got to abusing Beethoven. The manifestation ended by his rushing out of the room in the midst of a burst of cigar smoke and loud laughter, with violent maledictions, and awful threats of the vengeance that he would take. But it came to pass that none of these were accomplished. — That day the medley and ill-assorted group that had thronged to Bonn to see the inauguration of the statue broke up, and no more was heard of M. E——.

It was a week ere the bustle, and *cancan*, and discord of "the Star" were out of one's ears. Perhaps there might be something of destiny and fitness in the fact, that storm and strife in no common measure attended the honours to him whose life had been a long strife with storm, and pain, and decay, and neglect, and disease; and whose nature had yielded, more than the noblest natures should yield, to their untoward influences. The artist's security in the future fate of his music was a beautiful and worthy attestation of the "diviner mind" within him; but the man's moroseness,

and turbulence and suspicion, are not wholly to be forgiven or prayed away, by the most devout faith in his genius. Something of pain will make its way into the midst of all the pleasure and pride which every musician will feel when his name is mentioned. And it is singularly in accordance with a life that produces feelings like these, that the record of one of the most remarkable musical celebrations which the world has ever seen, should be flawed, and specked, and spotted in no common degree by traces of anger, jealousy, and unkindness—and that the recollection of it should have a strange dash of fever, discomfort, and incompleteness, mingling with all its sincerity and solemnity.

CHAPTER IV.

BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC AT BONN.

Some notes on Beethoven's "*Missa Solennis*"—Its performance at Bonn—His pianoforte *Concerto* in E flat—Dr. Liszt's playing of it.

THE great music by Beethoven, performed in Beethoven's honour, at this Beethoven Festival, under the conduct of Drs. Spohr and Liszt, consisted of his *Mass* in C in the Minster, his *Missa Solennis* and *Choral Symphony*, his *Overture* to "Coriolan," his *Symphony* in C minor, his pianoforte *Concerto* in E flat, — "Adelaida," — the song of the Seraph from his "Mount of Olives," and the *Finale* to his "Fidelio."

To descant on the larger portion of these works would happily be now a most superfluous labour, so far as English readers are concerned. Even the *Choral Symphony* is now well known in London, with all its brilliant and all its obscure

points—its splendours and its crudities (the last, few but striking); and such general remarks on the last manner of its composer as I have fancied not unimportant, belong to a subsequent chapter of these journals. Another of his great works selected, however, was, and probably will always remain to be, less familiar; and thus a few hints on its nature and properties may not be wholly impertinent.

It was at Bonn that many—myself among the number—came to know Beethoven's "*Missa Solennis*"—by being for the first time present at a correct performance of that stupendous musical work. Many among the listeners, probably, had attempted, by perusal, trials on a small scale, and other such expedients, to approach it; but the best of these contrivances is insufficient, let imagination be ever so quick, or science ever so ready. If "seeing is believing," how much more in Music is "hearing, knowing!" The mind's ear will go far, but the body's ear goes further. There is more fancy than truth in the poet's assurance, that—

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter . . . . ."

I remember, after the first performance of a

great work, asking its composer if he himself was satisfied. "It sounds well," was the answer, tears of emotion being in the speaker's eyes. The reality, for him, had proved better than the imagination. When the converse happens in Music,—when the idea outstretches beyond the bounds of practicable and pleasurable execution, sense of failure is apt painfully to predominate over sympathy with aspiration.

In some measure, such must be the impression produced by the "*Missa Solennis*"—but only so far, I think, as the deafness of Beethoven, and the rugged temper exasperated by his malady, led him to defy every proposition of change or reconsideration, and to treat every remonstrance made by his executants as so much puerile folly.—It is hardly possible to conceive such a vocal execution of this Mass, as implies ease to the singers, and power on their parts to attend to the expression of the music, instead of stiffly contesting for the notes, and taking the passages by force. The chorus that is to execute the *allegro con moto*, "*Et vitam venturi*," which winds up the "Credo," with one of the most harassing *codas* ever dreamed of, should be composed of *soprani* as brilliant as Grisi, of *con-*

tralti as powerful and rich as Alboni, of tenors as vigorous as Duprez and as flexible as Rubini, and of basses as sonorous and as mordant as Lablache. Even then, its perfect execution, as regards time, tone, and accent, would demand unslumbering watchfulness and effort; and we have no assurance that the effect would in any respect correspond with the preciousness of the materials brought together, or repay the almost torturing self-renunciation of the executants.

A point or two in this Mass are open to exception, in respect of the composer's idea. The second *coda* to the "Gloria," which enfeebles the effect of its magnificent close—the too theatrical roll of drum and trumpet, in the "*Dona*," which emphasize the petition for peace by suggesting the neighbourhood of war—may be instanced as among the eccentricities of Beethoven's late compositions, the nature and limits of which it is so well should be studied and defined. But need the clearest admission of these and a few other such specks and disproportions impair our enjoyment of that which is glorious and spiritually sublime in this work? So far from this, the mind that is once contented to leave irreconcileable contradictions un-

reconciled, is far more free to believe, to appreciate, and to take delight, than the one which is perpetually on a tip-toe strain to place false and true, incomplete and complete, within the same halo of sanctity, from mistaken ideas of reverence and humility. Whereas Admiration has only to add to, to perfect, and to vary its knowledge—to wait for clearer light, *not* to receive that which its instincts have at first rejected — Affectation must be ever retracing its steps, searching out by-ways, proclaiming crooked to be straight—and hard, soft—and false, true; until life and heart, and even the power of really loving and of wholly believing, are lost in the process—

"And nought is everything, and everything is nought."

And, supposing that what has been said in objection is admitted to the very fullest extent, —supposing that we do, because we *must*, own the presence of crudity, incompleteness,—of arrogant mistake, even—in the later works of Beethoven —supposing us to have declared that the strange, fierce, introverted life into which Temperament and Trial drove him, has left its traces on his utterances in Art, what then?—Does this make

the glory of what is glorious, the truth of what is true, less glorious or less true? His "*Missa Solennis*," will always stand as a marvel—as a colossal work, planned on a scale by many a cubit grander than its writer's Mass in C—yet still of the same order of architecture.

These two Masses, indeed, are alone among Catholic music.* They bear the marks of no epoch of Art — of no fashion in theology. There is nothing of chord orthodox or chord heterodox in them—very few traces of those *Shibboleths*, the tendency of which is to degrade those using them from sanctity into sanctimoniousness. A touch or two of the ecclesiastical chant may be found† in the "Bene-

* Not less catholic in tone—not less devotional in feeling—not less distinct from any Protestant or secular music by their composer—are Mendelssohn's "Convent Motetts," and his "*Ave Maria*," and his "*Lauda Sion*." There, as everywhere else, he did his best, like a true man and like a true artist who will do nothing that he *cannot* do well. But, in idea and in fancy, there is no possible comparison betwixt the two writers. We may say "Handel and Beethoven:" we cannot say "Beethoven," and any newer composer.

† Found, let it be added, in a purity, and employed with a freedom in intermixture with phrases of younger date (not to say more mundane quality), which is unparagoned.—Observe, especially, in this "Benedictus," the exquisite relief and pathetic sanctity given by the introduction of the unaccompanied voices in antiphony with

dictus" of the Mass in C, but none are to be detected in the "*Missa Solennis*." If the canonical intervals and harmonies exist, the effect is not there. There is not a touch of cope or cowl,—of the passionless eye, pinched-up mouth, or slack sliding step belonging to any religious order of any church-period, in Beethoven when he lays his gift on the altar;—as little is there the slightest mundane suggestion or emotion calculated for one instant to disturb the solemnity of the hour and the sanctity of the place in his Mass music. On the contrary, we may throughout it discern an earnest and intense devotional spirit, for the expression of which all existing means of utterance were too small and limited —a faith, claiming the heavens for its temple, and the elements for its ministers—laying hold of every power which modern science and discovery had revealed—bowing not only soul and body, but brain also, in lowliest adoration. Surely this is something greater and truer, more intensely and spiritually devotional, than the

the chorus, towards its close. In no other place do I know a more charming example of this now frequently-tried effect. Once or twice was it indicated by Handel (who, indeed, indicated everything), but it is here thoroughly put to its best account.

finest arrangement of tones Gregorian or Ambrosian,—than the most skilful piece of writing *alla Capella* or *alla Palestrina.*

The amount of nobility and beauty cast without effort into forms entirely new which is contained in this "*Missa Solennis*," cannot fail to arrest and enchant even the moderately cultivated listener when he first hears it. Setting aside the ample proportions and melodic richness of the ideas of the "Kyrie," the distribution of the *solo* voices at the very outset of the movement, so free without being formless, gives an effect of vastness, space, and limitless resource, such as we feel in those cathedral temples, where amongst arch and aisle, and clustered columns, the sense of confinement and boundary is lost. Observe, again, how this grows, spreads, receives new development and new light, without anything like perplexing intricacy, at the words, "*Christe eleison*," in spite of what may be called the secularity of the triple rhythm, which, so far from being mystified, is brought into the most distinct prominence by the *pizzicato* of the stringed instruments with which the *tempo* is marked.

In the "Gloria," again, the expression of the sudden and sonorous *piano*, on the words "*et in*

terra pax," is as unexpectedly thrilling as though Pergolesi and Handel, and a hundred more writers, had not used in the same place a similar exchange of strong for soft music. The ear may at first be distanced by the many modulations into remote keys, which this "Gloria" contains, ere it is allowed full satisfaction in the "*Quoniam*"—but the intense supplication of the "*Qui tollis*" (made as it were the prayer of countless multitudes, by the manner in which voices and chorus bear one another up, already adverted to), the enormous climax on the words "*cum sanctu spiritu*," made by the hardy use of the pedal bass, followed by the outbreak of ever-quickening jubilation in the *solo* voices, heightened and enhanced till the very last chord of the first *coda* is reached—afford those sensations such as only belong to the Shakspeares and Michael Angelos of Art. Nearer to the Holy of Holies, it is hardly possible for mortal poet to approach.

In the third hymn or "Credo," somewhat more of a clue is required, even before its *coda* "*et vitam*" is reached. The master's inspiration is more broken — his recourse to somewhat arbitrary artifices in reinforcement of picturesque expression is at once more obvious

and more bewildering than in the earlier portions of the Mass. The text, it is true, is more difficult, in all that it comprehends, than that of any other part of the service; but Beethoven had found it tractable and susceptible of the noblest musical treatment in his Mass in C; and in his second attempt, I confess, he suffers, by what seems a strain to outdo himself. The ear is put into a state of unrest, by the very commencement of the movement.—There the full opening chord of E flat (the "Credo" being in B flat)* deludes rather than directs it. From this it is difficult wholly to recover, and so frequent and abrupt are the changes of time, style, and design, that the occasional reiteration of the leading four notes of ejaculation, "*Credo!*" in place of giving unity, may well pass unobserved

* This device, of beginning out of the key, was employed elsewhere by Beethoven—as in his *rondos* to his grand *trio* in B flat, his pianoforte *concerto* in G *major*, his second Razumouffsky *quartett* in E minor and his posthumous stringed *quartett* in B flat. It was, perhaps, first noted as a peculiarity, recurring sufficiently often to amount to a characteristic, by Mr. G. Macfarren in his "Analytical Notices," prepared for the *Quartett Association*.—However permissible as an expedient for giving piquancy to a *finale*, it has to my ear a disturbing effect, as opening a grand composition; for such the "Credo" of a Catholic service must be considered, being performed, as it is, apart, complete, and after some interval of pause.

on a first hearing. Yet, if I venture to think Beethoven inferior to Beethoven's self in this cardinal movement, instinct alone (how much more subsequent examination and comparison) must assure the commonest listener that by no one save Beethoven could it have been written. The phrase on the words "*Qui propter nos homines*," of itself substantiates the master's presence—by its largeness of outline, rich beauty, and deep feeling. There are, again, some of his own incomparable touches of expression in the "*Et incarnatus*," especially that awful, shuddering modulation of terrible difficulty on the word "*Passus*:" but his earlier "Credo" is hardly less mighty in idea, and essentially greater, because more complete and simple, in its construction.

The "Benedictus" is the last movement on which I shall offer a remark; since, after the commencement of the "Agnus," the "*Dona*" escapes into regions so nearly bordering on the fantastic, that devotional feeling can with difficulty sustain itself, in this, again, how different Beethoven's earlier mass! But the "Benedictus," in form so florid, in structure so essentially simple,* is another of those movements

* There are few occupations, however amusing, more profit-

that possess themselves of the ear, not so much by the touches of genius which they contain, as by the tone of genius diffused throughout. Led, as the *solo* quartett there is, by a *soprano* voice of the highest pitch, the device by which every effect of painful acuteness is avoided, has always struck me as an example of that masterly daring which amounts to inspiration. This is the introduction into the score of a *violin obbligato*—whose clearer and more poignant sounds, temper by contrast the clear and almost shrill passages which the principal female voice has to execute and to sustain. By this expedient, again, has been gained one of those effects of extension which it seems to have been Beethoven's instinct, if not settled purpose, to keep throughout this Mass—perhaps, however, not without a certain approach to that secularity of which there is neither tinge nor trace in the preceding divisions of the composition.

I have offered a few notes on this remarkable work (I repeat), from believing that it is

less than marking musical coincidences. There are few writers who furnish so little occasion for the exercise as Beethoven. But who can hear the theme of this "Benedictus" without being reminded of that insipid pastoral *romance* in Mehul's "Joseph," which is the delight of all French tenor singers?

less understood than most of its master's compositions, because of the inevitable rarity of its being performed; and that this, more than any extra abstruseness and entanglement which it contains, has led thoughtful persons to regard it as fuller of crudity, enigma and difficulty than the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth *Symphony*. A mass, again, always loses terribly by being performed as concert-music.—At Bonn the *solos* were toiled through by a quartett of painstaking but ineffective vocalists. Nor was Dr. Spohr altogether the conductor to make the most of his materials, in music so gigantic, so spirited, calling for so much force, accent, and decision. The execution was, nevertheless, fine, —finer possibly than will be ever got in England, owing to the peculiar qualities of German voices, which are generally higher than ours in compass. By this the *altos* lose sonority; and, in truth, are for the most part somewhat woolly and wooden *mezzi soprani*—but the power gained for the trebles and tenors in music forced to and kept on such extreme heights, is a counterbalance, under the circumstances, of the highest possible value.

Ere I leave this Bonn Festival, I must lastly

commemorate as the most magnificent piece of pianoforte playing which I ever heard, Dr. Liszt's delivery of the *Concerto* in E flat. It has been twice my good fortune to hear Mendelssohn delight himself (for it was a delight to him) by playing the master's more wayward, delicate, and fascinating *Concerto* in G—these performances marking two of my brightest musical hours; but the work played at Bonn is the grander one, and the occasion was grander; and whereas its deliverer restrained himself within all the limits that the most sober classicist could have prescribed, he still rose to a loftiness, — in part ascribable to the enthusiasm of time and place, in part referable to a nature chivalresque, proud, and poetical in no common degree,—which I have heard no other instrumentalist attain. The weakness and insufficiency of his instrument was, somehow, forgotten in the glory of his execution. The triumph in the mind of the executant sustained the triumph in the idea of the composition without strain, without spasm ;—but with a breadth, and depth, and height, such as made the genius of the executant approach the genius of the inventor. That such approximations do exist in music, though few and far

between, I have long ceased to doubt. There are players, there are poets;—and as a poet, Listz was possibly never so sublimely or genuinely inspired as in that performance, which remains a bright and precious thing in the midst of all the curiously particoloured recollections of that Beethoven Festival at Bonn.—The giver of the feast (for such Liszt was) made his mark there by his music no less than by his munificence.

CHAPTER V.

BEETHOVEN AS AN INFLUENCE.

Admiration not always implying imitation—Remark on those who have classed Beethoven's writings in periods—His originality already developed in the "*Sinfonia Eroica*"—His tendency to employ the devices which belong to all styles of music; the *Adagio* to his *Choral Symphony*—How far disguise is an object of legitimate attempt—Beethoven's caprices of irregularity—His fragmentary passages, without explicable meaning, referred to and cited—His harmonies—Protest against finality in criticism; M. Oulibicheff—A note on "competent representation"—Further examples—Imitation of Beethoven—Ferdinand Ries—Imitation rendered difficult by the absence of mannerism—When and where the easy imitation of Beethoven's peculiarities began; and why it was attempted—His vocal writings—The good and the bad—The voice not an instrument amenable to despotic coercion—Beethoven thoroughly capable of using as well as of abusing it—The good and the less good parts of "Fidelio"—The worthy successors of Beethoven all original—M. Berlioz—Summing up.

THAT there are deathless poets in Art who take rank by the works which they produce, considered without reference to their consequences—

as well as artists who are immortal in right of the influences they exercise on their age, is a distinction not always sufficiently kept in sight or memory.—To imagine that everything that we admire the most is therefore fit to serve for universal pattern, is as absurd as would be the fancy of any tourist who, having looked at Mont Blanc, resolved to imitate that mountain in his own park among the fens. Many are the mighty works to which we must look up, knowing them to be solitary—too high, too original, too brilliant, to be reproduced on a smaller scale with weakened outlines and a dimmer lustre. Every poet does not furnish us with household words that can be sung over the cradle, or with a phraseology capable of universal adoption. We must rejoice in the spirit of certain masters, —we must analyze, because we may emulate, the form of others.

There is more than ordinary need of distinctions like these for those who are under the spell of the wondrous genius of Beethoven, when we observe the use which has been made of certain of his compositions as models, watchwords, points of departure. Thus, a few desultory remarks on that in his music which can be taken,

and that which should be left,—may not impertinently follow a sketch of those mad days, made up of noisy orgies and dignified solemnities, during which his statue was set up in his birthplace as "a station" for all pilgrims of Art to come.

It has been the fashion with most of those who have written on the music of Beethoven to class his works in periods, with the view of insisting on the development of his peculiar individuality, and of adding to such assertion a corollary, that his successors, to be worth attention, must proceed further in the road that he opened out, during his later years of composition.—If it be meant by this process to claim for him any progressive growth in originality, I apprehend that facts must be strained more violently than facts are ordinarily strained by those who are in love with classification, and desire to set a system. The brilliant and peculiar inspirations of Beethoven, the manner in which at once he broke away from all that Mozart and Haydn had done before him, is shown as clearly in the second *Sonata* of his first book of pianoforte *Sonatas* (Op. 2, dedicated to Haydn), in his *Sonatas alla fantasia* (Op. 27), in his early

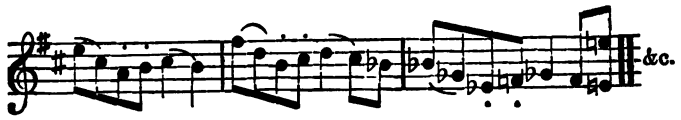
Pianoforte Trio in C minor (which, it has been said, that Haydn dissuaded him from publishing), as in his very latest works. The *Sinfonia Eroica*, his third *Symphony*, save in the solitary matter of introducing voices, must have seemed in its young day as entirely original as the *Choral Symphony* did later—the second of his *Razumouffsky Quartetts*, that in E minor, must have been felt as freakish as the last of those compositions, in which the rhapsodists assure us that, for the first time, Beethoven came to the full expression of his peculiar originality.—For to what do the discoveries so called in the master's later works amount? To the annulling of form, as some would fain prove?—nay, merely, I maintain, to a confusing of form, beyond the instant recognition of the educated ear—to an obstinate determination of demanding *habituated* listeners, as well as sound and thoroughly ready musicians, and to a somewhat mistaken resolution to mix up in the style elect — that of instrumental composition—all the devices that belong to every style. As an instance, there are few ears —be they ever so quick, ever so prepared for novelty—that, on a first hearing of the *Adagio* of the *Choral Symphony*, will recognise that

Beethoven chose to write an instrumental song, *with instrumental symphonies*—as a theme for the future elaborate and bewitching variations of which the movement (the two episodes in $\frac{3}{4}$ *tempo* allowed for) mainly consits. Yet such is the fact; and the device fails because it does not suggest itself as a new device to the hearer, —but is taught him only by the eye when he peruses the score. The same clue unties the mysteries of that slow movement, the "*Canzone in the Lydian mode*," in the Posthumous *Quartett* (Op. 132); and both examples are rather to be classed among such recondite experiments as those in which Bach delighted, than with real strokes of bright and new fancy. Both were more or less anticipated in the curious and only partially effective *finale* to the *Sinfonia Eroica*—where, before the theme for variations was frankly announced, the composer puzzled rather than piqued his public by showing the scaffolding—and in the more complete *Adagio* to the grand instrumental *trio* in B flat major, where a pompous theme in the slowest possible movement was dressed in variations, some of which are so curious as well as felicitous, that the ear may be pardoned if, till this fact be

apprehended, it loses recognition of the theme so mystified in the glosses of that theme.

And here a moment's digression may be made to inquire how far the ingenuity of complete disguise is a legitimate object in musical construction. We are used to laugh at the old pedantries of the scholastic contrapuntists of the elder times, who would build a composition on a known chant as a ground bass in so high, and so complicated, and so florid a form of architecture, that the ground aforesaid was totally smothered out of sight. Whether the extreme exigence of the rhapsodists may not, after its kind, be utterly as arrogant, inconsiderate, and at true variance with all the best purposes of art, admit of close question. At all events, that Beethoven loved to drive the experiment to its ultimate consequences, in regard to Variations, will be seen—not only in his tremendous and tedious *suite* of thirty-three Variations on the well-known *waltz* by Diabelli (Op. 120), but also in the last movement of his last pianoforte *Sonata* (the one in C minor, Op. 111), and again in the varied theme of his late *quartett* (Op. 131). There are few examples, like this last, of music of the clearest

structure sounding utterly confused, by reason of the amount of freak, and change, and artifice introduced, not so much to satisfy as to disappoint.

Such, however, are what may be called the caprices of regularity, in which, while proportion, and sequence, and mathematical harmony of parts are virtually conciliated and attended to, every possible attempt is made to shake the average reader's faith, to bewilder his powers of attention, to beguile him into fancying that he is lost when he is close at home. In this there is more conceit than novelty—more of the tyranny of fancy than its power. But there are works of Beethoven that contain innovations more serious than these—that reveal passages thrust in without any intelligible reason—new phrases that are virtually so many unwelcome interlopers in the midst of a regular composition, which entirely "throw out" the ear best trained to follow the freaks and frenzies of the poet, and containing no defence for themselves in their superior beauty. Such, for instance, is the phrase of four *bars*, in the introduction to the *finale* of the *Choral Symphony*,—I allude to the *poco ritenente adagio*:—

the pertinence or charm of which will remain a mystery till Chaos come again.—Such, also, is the *cadenza poco adagio*, for the four *solo* voices in B major, which occurs towards the close of the movement, perversely interrupting the excitement of the *stretto*, and which might have been solely intended to exhibit the *solo* vocalists strained to an awkward task, almost beyond their forces. Similar examples of the known laws, forms of symmetry and of climax wilfully, needlessly, and ineffectively violated, might be adduced from the late *quartetts*, anxiously sown in among the most splendid, the freshest, and the most original thoughts of the master, and, therefore, curiously, by the worshippers, confounded *with* them; but to enumerate these is unnecessary, since the specimens cited will suffice to make clear the cast of distinction and criticism here attempted, and to illustrate what it is that the apostles of a new revelation have imitated, as regards form or no form, in Beethoven's later compositions.

A like course adopted with his harmonies might show, I apprehend, that the sole peculiarities among them, which the discordant school of modern effect-seekers has tried to adopt and to extend, are precisely those which are virtually not discoveries—which cannot be defended—being whimsicalities thrown in by him, under the impression of giving the last piquancy to his contrasts, after his ear had ceased to be able to give account of, or keep watch over, the limits which separate sonority, suspense, and cacophony. If, however, we were to enter the question of harmonies permissible and intolerable, we might be lost in that most discordant domain of musical controversy, where theorist pelts theorist: this with Rameau—that with Marx—a third with Bach—a fourth with the pure Italian church writers—and be "settled" by that most easily snatched up of all arguments, which reminds us that every new concord or discord has, in its turn, been dragged into an unwilling and pedantic world by main force. In the midst of confusions like these, Common Sense loses her voice, and all idea of Precedent in progress is scouted: so that, to instance what may seem to tolerably

exercised listeners pure or impure—allowable on the score of heightening climax, or to be deprecated as substituting importunate harshness or ugliness, for that sternness which holds back the ear for a moment, only that its coming rapture of relief may be all the ampler and more perfect—would be a loss of time—a quail-note in a storm, by the most pertinacious emission of which the strife of angry tongues would be only exasperated, not stilled.

Let it be earnestly urged, however, that the above attempts to define and select, own no kindred with those of the formalists, who are for ever placing their own barriers of finality to invention, or else who allow some one idolized writer to place the barriers for them. M. Oulibicheff, whose work on Mozart is one of the most earnest contributions to musical literature lately put forth, thus assumes that there is one Median and Persian—or rather, may we not say, Mozartean and Procrustean?—form for the *quartett*, for the *symphony*, and this he holds his idol elect to have reached; and beyond this, all such amplifications and strayings as Beethoven ventured, are only so many steps towards decay. With him the fugue in Mozart's *quartett* in G

major is a canonical fugue, fit for a quartett; while the fugue in Beethoven's *Razumouffsky quartett* in C major, is something too pretentious, flaring, and spun out—a picture with a subject too large for its canvas. But who shall make an inevitable, an irrevocable scale, according to which Genius must express its greater, less, and least thoughts? What is the "Ezekiel" by Raphael at Florence but a cabinet picture? or the tremendous "Medusa" by "Lionardo," in the *Uffizi*, but a mere head? What is Milton's sonnet "On the Massacre of Piedmont" but a cabinet poem? Yet is there any gazer, any reader, who can cavil at the one or the other, as being unfitly rendered? In a work of musical excitement, the proper length is decided by the sustaining power of the musical poet:—while that which can be competently represented by competent executants,* decides the question of propriety of manner. But in proportion as

* Here a cautionary word may be added:—"Competent representation" does not mean a perpetual study to overcome ungracious difficulties. The latter preclude the former. It means such a performance as is only possible when the means are consulted, as well as the end decided upon. In answer to this, I may have Shakspeare's *Caliban* and *Ariel*, also his *Cobweb*, *Pease-blossom*, *Moth*, and *Mustard-seed*, marshalled in array

the mind is free to follow Fancy whereso-ever she can bear it, must Reason be awake to make sure that it is Fancy whom we are following; and must Reverence, with eyes upraised to the great and universal beauty and simplicity of art, stand in place of that personal *pseudo*-reverence (in reality covert vanity, calling itself idol-worship) which *dare* not, because it cannot, and *will* not distinguish—and which vows implicit and unquestioning homage to all that touches its own sympathies, or teaches in its own

against me. And what shall be said in return? That these plays (as plays) are good, in spite—not because—of their delicious appeals to the poetical faith and imagination of those under their spell. Further, that Music, because vague in language (and thus more limited in resource), is bound within stricter laws than Poetry, if she would not lose herself within a chaos. There is no fear of any student of Shakspeare, owing to ineffective personation on the stage, mistaking what the master meant when he strove to conjure up these Spirits of moonshine, and dew, and the scent of flowers. There is his language to make his conception clear, even if it surpass human power to personate it. Not so when the musician crosses the boundaries of executive possibility. Let our imagination of "unheard melodies" be ever so quick and susceptible, he then always, more or less, is like one writing in unknown tongue—grasping at effects which no powers of comparison that experience can give, enable us to represent. This distinction is perpetually lost sight of—most of all by the poetical critic on Music who is not a musician, and who sighs and strains after his own dreams—not the artist's.

school; or to all that has been done by him who has made war in accordance with its own prejudices. It is not the length of our master's appeals—it is not the mighty, and deep, and lofty mould in which he chooses to cast his thoughts, using what means of utterance he will—that will excite question or remonstrance in a well-balanced mind. The *Adagio* (to instance) in his marvellous *solo Sonata* in B flat (Op. 106), will rivet, though it may fatigue, the new listener; for the newest competent listener will there follow the thought, and trace the path of the construction, and not be bewildered because (to venture a fantastic *simile*) he is led into a *Coliseum* of vastness and grandeur.

But no listener, old or new, will ever listen to the final fugue, which closes that very same *Sonata* without being more fatigued than riveted —without feeling that there is much to be reconciled with—that there are knots which cannot be untied without wear and tear of the thread—effects to which the ear may become inured, but which it can never enjoy—moments of close and adventurous combination, where neither the intricacy nor the adventure are so remarkable as the morbid activity which generated them. And

while the *adagio* will reveal itself to be a somewhat mysterious and Titanic masterpiece—so assuredly will the fugue in question be discerned to be a magnificent but chaotic mistake—of genius.

Now, let us glance for a moment at the imitators of Beethoven, and see if we can make out what they have selected for imitation. The first of these—nay, for some twenty years, the only one to be found—among European composers, at all deserving the name, was Ferdinand Ries; and he attached himself, by love, by intercourse, and by habit, to those works by his master, in which the master's peculiar genius was complete—not clouded, flawed, or crossed with singularities never to be unriddled. By the mass of compositions by Ries before the public (which, indeed, for any present acceptance that they find, might never have been written at all), he is proved to have been a thoroughly trained musician—commanding fluency of expression in no common measure—not without a humour of his own—not without a certain vein of wild and national melody — not without a fire and a brightness that remove most of his carefully-finished works beyond the category of tedious

and imitative exercise-music. He wrote well for the orchestra; and being, in his day, a superb piano-forte player, he wrote effectively for his own instrument. But, seduced by the bold, uncompromising manner of his original, he fancied that abrupt transitions, unforeseen interruptions, harsh modulations—if applied to thoughts in themselves weak and second-hand, or in no wise fit for such treatment—would bring him to a grandeur and an authority approaching those of his model elect. They did but succeed, alas! in earning for him an unfair reputation for oddity and rudeness, without the relief of any better or more agreeable individualities. He has, in the general musical world, a fame little better than that of the adroit country actor, who succeeded in catching some of the salient points of Kemble's stately declamation, or Kean's violent and spasmodic transitions. Yet, as life advanced, and he emancipated himself from that excessive admiration which takes the form of outward simulation, and only arrives at the success of clever grimace, Ries produced many works that deserve a better fate than to be forgotten—in which, though an early unsettlement of mind can, perhaps, be traced, there may be also found a spirit, interest, indi-

viduality, such as few writers, if they now command such qualities, now exhibit.

By the example of Ries, then—a solitary example, morever, among German composers, (whereas Mozart has had his thousands, and, later still, Mendelssohn his tens of thousands of close imitators), it may be seen how the great qualities of Beethoven defy dilution, copy, or reproduction; because they are qualities far more dependent on lightning-keen originality of idea, than on this system of orchestration or the other choice of harmony,—than on this manner of introducing a subject or the other mode of working up a close. How, indeed, is second-rate fancy to deal with genius that never did—that could not—repeat itself? There is no making over again, on any pretext, such an effect as that of the suspense, followed by the glorious burst of triumph, which is now so familiar to us, in the *scherzo* and martial *finale* of the C minor *Symphony*. There is no parroting such a *programme* (not prelude)* to an opera as the

* By those who are fond of analysis, the above distinction offers a theme fruitful in speculation and comparison. There is a defence for an *overture* being in some sort a table of contents—picture in little of the work that is to come—by those who reject

overture to "Leonora," in which the grasp of the master proves itself gigantic and forcible enough to work up all manner of fragments, so as to make a whole singular in its coherence, the material considered. Were the form of the *Sonata alla fantasia* in C sharp minor adopted by any adventurous new writer, his copy would be simply intolerable—as grossly and nakedly calling attention to the great original, which he was struggling to reproduce. The real inventions of Beethoven are all single, of no school —having no connection one with the other, save by their surpassing loftiness, and the amazing affluence of invention they display. We may see, indeed, here and there, that he used certain instruments in his scores with a richer license than his predecessors,—that he availed himself, when he pleased, of episode, to a degree surprising in one who could spin such wonderful

what is unexpected in Art. To myself the curtain-tune which prepares the ear for the tone of the story, without promising any of its great incidents or moments of fascination, is more welcome. And on this side of the debate Beethoven may be counted as an example—since, the overture to "Fidelio" selected by him, and which now belongs to the opera, does not contain a single *motivo* afterwards used—it is merely an animated and expressive prelude, fit to open a tale of "love more strong than death."

poems out of such simple groups of notes as the one opening the C minor *Symphony*. We can recognize among his piano *Sonatas* one as an example of agitation (the one in D minor, No. 2, Op. 31); another (the one in D major, No. 3, Op. 10), as containing a wonderful contrast betwixt the sublime sadness of its *Largo e mesto*, and the unbridled freakishness of its final *Allegro*. But this is all: for the slightest attempt to make any of these over again, conscious or unconscious, would betray itself, and subject the maker of it to such immediate indignities as awaited the bird in peacock's plumes of the fable.

Some instinct of a truth like this has served the sagacious musicians of all countries, as regards the account to which the really great works of Beethoven might be turned. They have been resorted to as quickeners of the fancy, not as models of academical study. He would be a poor and meagre-minded architect who could gather no strength, nor food for future daring, under the shadow of the Pyramids; but these would assuredly not take the form of a little pyramid. We have had compositions written in the style of Handel (Mo-

zart's capital pianoforte *Sonata* as an example)—a library of *masses*, *overtures*, *quartetts*, *operas*, in the style of Mozart. We have seen more lately, no less clever a man than Herr Marschner take fire at the wizard torch of Weber, and (to continue the simile for a moment) burn blue, and green, and red, as the magician had done before him; — but nothing in the style of Beethoven was largely attempted, till that time arrived with regard to his fame, which will arrive for all greatness,—at which healthy admiration no longer suffices, but morbid admiration begins: when the eccentricities of genius must be proved its highest excellencies, its blemishes its chiefest beauties, and its wayward wanderings its most direct flights. Then, imitation came easily enough. Of all stage-tricks, a mist is the easiest to manufacture; and the painter was more universally humorous than he knew himself to be, who, showing his patron a huge expanse of gray wall, invited that astounded personage to accept it as the passage of *Pharaoh* and his host through the Red Sea, the waves of which had closed over them!

Something like the above may possibly be

the real case of Beethoven and his influences—of Beethoven and his imitators—in regard to his instrumental works. Passing to his vocal writings, definition is possibly an easier matter, and one liable to less argument.

These vocal writings may be clearly separated—the good from the bad. No one, I suppose, will theoretically declare that a mode of composition which deprives the executant of half his powers is either wise, skilful, or artistic. An orchestral composer, who preferred perpetually to use the imperfect notes of the trumpets—who tormented the *viola* by compelling it to do the violin's work, or *vice versâ*—who chose that the flute should represent the *chalumeau* of the clarinet—would be called "bad" by his orchestral subjects, as, also, would be one who, by placing his instruments awkwardly, deprived them of half their sonority. Why, then, should the voice, as an instrument, be misused?

But the voice is *not* an instrument—in oratorio, opera, or song—not one among many equal powers, blending and co-operating for some general object—it is the soul which sets the body in motion, and to which all the members of that body are subservient. To it is

confided the story, with its sentiment and emotion; and all the excessive garniture and drapery, in which its free-will becomes swathed to the stifling point, and by which it runs a risk of losing its hold as presiding spirit of the scene,—however seductive, however gorgeous and intricate in themselves—are but a mistake, leading towards decay in Art, by the displacement and damage of certain among its materials. And more, it is with Art we have to do, not Nature; of which truism the symphonic school of composers have need to be loudly reminded, when, in the pride and power of their preference for that vast convention, the orchestra, they demand that the singer shall not *sing*, but say, sigh, sob, or scream, so as to make his or her parts come as close to rude speech as it is possible. One might be ashamed to recite such self-evident truths as the above, had not a school of musicians arisen, who resolutely pick and choose from among the materials of art only such as suit their own imperfect sympathies or imperfect knowledge; and were not Beethoven perpetually appealed to as one who could do no wrong, and who threw aside all the antiquated canons as so many worn-out supersti-

tions and popular fallacies, thereby emancipating his successors from his own time forth for evermore.

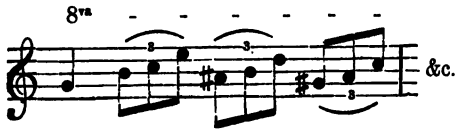
But, as has been asserted in the matter of symmetrical melody, there is no such wholesale and systematic abandonment of vocal seduction in the works of Beethoven, as ought to exist, were he, indeed, to be of authority as an example. He was tyrannical to the voice by fits, rather than by consistent practice,—increasingly so, as age drew the torments of deafness, and mistrust, and contradiction mistaken for the maintenance of free-will, more closely round him. His "Adelaida,"—his *soprano scena* "*Ah! perfido!*" (with the exception of a few bars in its *coda*), his entire *Mass* in C *major*, also, are vocal to a wish. The leading melodies, too, of his choral *Fantasia*, and of the *finale* to his *Choral Symphony* (the last selected, sweetened, and purified by him with great solicitude), are in the most perfect conceivable vocal style; although, being pitched in registers inconveniently acute, they threaten, not tempt, the singers. In continuation, the "Prisoners' Chorus" ("Fidelio"), the "Dervise Chorus" ("Ruins of Athens"), the "Bridesmaids' Chorus" ("King

Stephen"), may be cited in proof that Beethoven knew, as well as any man ever did, how to set forth his voices, in passages of vocal interest, character, and charm, let his orchestra be ever so brilliant. Strip even the chant of the Turkish fanatics above referred to of its descriptive triplet accompaniments,—the incessant tune has still a wild, ferocious character, totally distinguishing it from a bundle of unconnected ejaculations bound together by the orchestra. But there are parts of "Fidelio" to which such praise cannot be applied—of which the vocal portion would lose all interest and significance were instrumental support withdrawn; or where it is remorselessly employed as merely so much *remplissage* thrown in to heighten the effect of the situation. Let any one who is curious compare the opening duet of that opera, betwixt *Jacquino* and *Marcellina*, with the opening duet of Mozart's "Figaro," betwixt *Figaro* and *Susanna* —the great *aria* of *Pizarro*, with the explosion of *The Count* in Mozart's opera (which in tone is very nearly as serious)—or Beethoven's pistol quartett in the vault with Mozart's cemetery duet in "Don Juan," and the distance betwixt vocal insufficiency and vocal sufficiency of in-

terest will be made clear. Further to pursue specification—it might be said that the *Adagio* of *Leonora's* grand *scena* owes no small part of its richness and beauty to the luxurious accompaniment of horns, with which it is decked out (of such difficulty, that the singer must follow, rather than be followed by her instrumental playfellows)—that, from the point at which the "Prisoners' Chorus" ceases, the first *finale* becomes insipid—not solely from the want of motion on the stage, but from the want of beauty and feature in its vocal phrases. * Tried on the same principles, the opening to the last *finale* of "Fidelio" must be owned as trivial and wanting in dignity †—its central movement in B flat, $\frac{3}{4}$ *sostenuto assai*, to flag for lack of interest; and the ear can be said only to be really braced up to the exhilaration and excitement

* Let any one curious to pursue the analysis compare this close of an act with the music in similar situations of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell."

† The same criticism applies more emphatically to the final choruses to "The Ruins of Athens," and to "King Stephen," than which, as regards idea, it would be difficult to find anything more common-place in the most common-place work by Italian composers. The contemptuous haste with which these seem to have been flung off is indicated in no part of Beethoven's slightest instrumental compositions.

which it was the composer's intention to express, when that most joyous of all joyous phrases for the violins—

introduces and carries on a strain of brilliant ecstacy so irresistible as, for an instant, to make us forget in what the character of the movement lies.

Betwixt the outrageous difficulty of some parts of Beethoven's vocal writing, and his utter indifference to charm and interest in others, it is not surprising if worshippers of the wholesale school, refusing to admit blemish, inconsistency, or arrogance in their Divinity, should fail when they adopt as principles his faults, even though, by the adoption, they at once follow the fashion of the hour, which is to rely on orchestral accumulation, and spare themselves the contemned labour (which is not small) of refining their vocal melodies and of studying vocal capacity and vocal expression,—not word by word—not spasm by spasm—not cry by cry—but in its more temperate, more general, more artistic

relation to the text. Viewed as a work and as a whole, however noble "Fidelio" must be rated—viewed as a model, it is *bad;* and that portion of it which is easy to be imitated because defective and incomplete, is little worthy of its master's fame. So that, here again, we perceive that such influence as that opera has exercised on the student, has tended to injure, not to elevate his art, by leading him into confusions—by seducing him into forgetting gratuitous error, for the sake of the splendid shows and complications to which Truth-in-Beauty has been sacrificed,—by encouraging him to act on that fatal canon, that Genius recognizes no differences or qualities of material, but breaks them all into a subservient expression of its great thoughts,—in place of setting out its bright imaginings with double lustre, by turning every quality, peculiarity, natural gift, and acquired polish, to their highest account.

The real inventors since Beethoven—in *opera*, Weber and Meyerbeer; in *symphony* and *quartett*, Mendelssohn; in pianoforte music, Moscheles and Chopin—have not borrowed their style from him.—Weber studied popular melody, and tried "to flatter the ear." Let him be by fits

ever so cruel to the voices, he wrote no opera in which vocal display and vocal charm were not obviously aimed at by him to the full extent of his knowledge.—Meyerbeer is solicitously, curiously rhythmical—doing his best, even, to introduce regular form into the accompaniments of his recitatives, and though sometimes in his works as patchy as *Harlequin's* coat, as lustrous and clear in his patchiness as that gay garment. The strongest hold of Moscheles on fame is in his *Studies* and *Allegri di bravura*, for which no pattern or precedent is to be found in the Viennese master's writings—as little for his four-handed pianoforte *Sonatas;* while his *Concertos*, with all their solid science, are pieces of display for the *solo*-player, with orchestral support, which Beethoven's cannot be said to be. Chopin, too, rests on his *Studies*, *Notturni* and *Mazurkas*,—on purity and peculiarity of form, in short,—his occasional crudity of harmony having a colour and quality of its own, or, if it resemble any model, suggesting very vaguely what a wayward and fantastic student might come to, if, after pampering his waywardness, he got entangled in Spohr's preference for intimation by *appoggiatura* and progression

by half tones.—Of Mendelssohn, who created entirely original works in the style where Beethoven was strongest — *symphonies*, chamber-music, &c.—a word will be said later.

It is perfectly true, that the admirers of M. Berlioz may cite him as a close student of Beethoven's singularities, and as the composer who has done the utmost to carry them out to their ultimate consequences. But with this acute critic and charming writer, as a musician, there is no call to deal in a work on Germany before the Revolutions. When the history of German influences on France comes to be examined, it will be time enough to treat a matter so interesting, so delicate, and in every point of view so intricate.

If, however, the technical influences of Beethoven on musical composition have been few, and those few calculated to bewilder, not to lead aright, the student, the glory and power of the poetical impressions he has produced are such as no language can caricature. When the mind is set free from the fancied necessity of universal defence and blind imitation—when the inquiry, "*What can I do like this, or better than this?*" no longer palsies the hand or intoxicates the

brain—when admiration is permitted to indulge itself; on the one hand, clear of personality, on the other, willing to class, to separate, and to understand—the works of this Giant in instrumental music reveal themselves, and remain as a treasure, uncounted in its richness, unapproached in its sublimity, unparagoned in its brilliancy. There is hardly a mood of the mind or a dream of the fancy, which will not find response or fulfilment in his orchestral or chamber music. It seems impossible to conceive a state of satiety, in which his works should be reputed as too well known. Like Shakspeare's plays—like Handel's choral inventions—like the vast and versatile genius of Michael Angelo—they are exhaustless in suggestion; and year by year will they draw in a larger circle of worshippers, and more and more will their real truth and greatness be appreciated, long after the affected homages of incomplete thinkers shall have died of the weakness of their indiscriminate extravagance. The more reverently and sincerely Beethoven's beauties are understood, the more clearly will it be perceived how far they transcend imitation, and why they distance reproduction.

CHAPTER VI.

MUSIC AT LIEGE AND COLOGNE—1846.

Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" at Liege—Peculiarities of the Belgian Church Festival—Picturesque sermon in St. Martin's Church—Unsatisfactory performance—The redeeming point at its close—The *Männer Gesang-Fest* at Cologne—A word in favour of the town — The concourse thither — The Gürzenich-hall—The musical arrangements—A note of the performance—A few general remarks on German *liedertafel* music—Cologne hospitalities—The Cathedral—Beethoven's "Mass in C"—A few notes on it—The works in completion of the Cathedral—Projects and "empty air"—The serenade to Mendelssohn—Close of the meeting.

THE early summer of 1846 was a great year for the Rhine Land and its adjacent district; since then the Lower Rhenish Festival at Aix la Chapelle was conducted by Mendelssohn, and starred by Mddle. Jenny Lind; and within a fortnight afterwards was celebrated at Liege the "Fête Dieu," for which Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" was written.

The latter, as distinguished by the performance of a new and important composition, could entice H—— and myself out of London, though the date was the middle of June; and though, owing to the carelessness and apathy of continental announcement on like occasions, our sudden journey had to be risked without any clear idea whether or not we might arrive in time for the first performance of the new work. All, however, went well. A more lovely midnight never shone on Italy than the one which lighted us down the brimming Thames, among a fleet of vessels, rapidly gliding down to the sea in the broad moonshine. Ostend looked less shabby, less extortionate, less rudely comfortless than usual, in the early afternoon; and Louvain, with its fantastically rich Town Hall overhanging our quiet, comfortable inn, made a capital sleeping-place. On reaching St. Martin's, at Liege, the next morning, in time for the commencement of the show, all sense of flurry and fever was at once dissipated by our hearing that the new hymn was reserved for the vesper celebrations of the day.

There was much in that Belgian Church Festival to notice and to recollect—in the curi-

ous mixture of antique sentiment and belief, with modern materials, which it included. There was something to smile at, in the criticisms bestowed on it by visitors from Antwerp, who had held some Church Festival of their own not long before, and who, in the energy and irony of comparison, voted the show at Liège to be poor, and shabby, and peasant-like, and provincial, and theatrical.—The two English strangers will never forget the kindly and cordial hospitality with which they were received, and the glimpse afforded them of one of those happy home-worlds, where prosperity and domestic concord and elegant cultivation combined, seem hardly to leave a hole through which evil can creep in, or envy creep out. But the whole ceremony was too individually Low-Country in its strength and its weakness—in its parade and its humble familiarity—in its success and its failure—to be noticed in a book dealing with German art and manners, save in regard to the German work and the German master that had lured us thither.

There is no need here to write about the "Lauda Sion"—that loveliest of modern Catholic hymns—nor to point out how felicitously, in

setting the Latin monkish verse, Mendelssohn was able to clothe himself in the peculiar garment of a ritual different to his own; and, by the strong sympathies of art, dramatically (as it were) to fall into the tone of a form of worship, at once more solemn, sensual, and scenic than the forms of Lutheranism. But the performance of the "Lauda Sion" gave us occasion to see the composer in a position at once original and trying—as audience at the first performance of a new and important work by himself—and in a case where the performance, moreover, was such as would have thrown a more nervous and less healthily minded man into paroxysms of irritability or of despair.

It was a pity that those who had commissioned such a composer to write such a work, had so entirely miscalculated their means of presenting it, even respectably. The picturesque old church of St. Martin is one of those buildings which swallow up all sound, owing to the curve of the vaults and the bulk of the piers: the orchestra was little more powerful, when heard from below, than the distant scraping of a Christmas serenade far down the street; the chorus was toneless, and out of tune; and

only one *solo* singer, the *soprano*, was even tolerable. On arriving at Liege, with the purpose of conducting his work, Mendelssohn gave up the matter in despair. "No; it is not good; it cannot go well; it will make a bad noise," was his greeting to us. "I am sorry you must hear it. But now that you are so far, will you not come on to Cologne, and hear the two thousand singers?" These were to assemble at the *Männergesang Fest*, which was to be held a day or two later in the Rhine town.—And then he spoke rapturously of the good music they had been just making at Aix la Chapelle —and laughingly of the manner in which all these wanderings to and fro had drawn him off from finishing his "Elijah," which was not yet complete, though the promised time for its completion was drawing nigh—and the "Lauda Sion" and its vexations, and his fruitless journey down to Liege, seemed forgotten.

We drove with him that afternoon up to St. Martin's Church, to hear, as he merrily styled it, "the execution of his music." The sight of the steep, narrow, winding street, decked out with fir-trees, and banners, and the escutcheons of the different towns of Belgium, pleased him;

for he was as keen a lover of a show as a child, and had a true artist's quick sense of the picturesque.—Within the church, a very imposing spectacle was set before us. Previous to the execution of the "Lauda Sion," a sermon suited to the mystic festival was to be preached; and close to the seats occupied by us beneath the pulpit, sate in proud and gorgeous assemblage a collection of Belgian ecclesiastics, archbishops, bishops, and others, magnificently vested in scarlet, and purple, and gold, and damask—a group never to be forgotten, as displayed in the broad, clear sunlight of that warm June afternoon. Some of the old heads were full of power—some venerable in their devout meekness of expression: two I recollect particularly, from their gloomy, yet acute and sinister, intelligence of lip and eye—and the haughty disdain with which their owners endured a discourse apparently little to their taste, and to our judgment alike weak, vehement, and tawdry. In some such gathering must Herr Lessing have studied the fine heads of the churchmen in his great historical picture of John Huss before the Council of Constance. At the close of the sermon, these dignitaries retreated

in stately file to the altar, leaving the attention free to listen to the new Hymn, the performance of which at once began.

Not Envy's self could have helped being in pain for its composer—so slack, and tuneless, and ineffective was the execution of this clear and beautiful work—by a scrannel orchestra, and singers who could hardly be heard, and who evidenced their nationality by resolutely holding back every movement. But in the last verse, *alla breve*—

"Ecce panis angelorum"—

there came a surprise of a different quality. It was scenically accompanied by an unforeseen exposition of the Host, in a gorgeous gilt tabernacle, that slowly turned above the altar, so as to reveal the consecrated elements to the congregation. Incense was swung from censers; and the evening sun, breaking in with a sudden brightness, gave a faëry-like effect to the curling fumes as they rose; while a very musical bell, that timed the movement twice in a bar, added its charm to the rite. I felt a quick grasp on my wrist, as Mendelssohn whispered to me, eagerly, "Listen! how pretty that is! it makes me amends for all their bad playing

and singing,—and I shall hear the rest better some other time." That other time, I believe, never came for the composer of the "Lauda Sion"—since this was only the year before his death!

After such a failure in the musical pleasure which had lured us out so far, little temptation was needed to induce us to try what compensation might be found in the meeting of the Singing Societies of Germany and Belgium at Cologne: where also some new music, written by Mendelssohn for the occasion, was to be performed.

It was in those days too much the fashion to vituperate the city of the Three Kings, as a rough, noisy, dirty place, in which no one would willingly pause who could help it—every traveller being able to quote the obloquy cast upon its "savours" by Coleridge, as an excuse for hurrying along so soon as his hasty visit had been paid to the Cathedral, and the due quantity of disinfecting "waters" had been purchased! Yet any one who has an eye for modern physiognomy and character, or who cares to trace out and to study antique art, will find Cologne

—in spite of its crowded hotels, its ceaseless noises, its abominable streets, and its incessant "charge" of travelling English—well worth knowing thoroughly, and selecting as a halting-place.

This time it served as a rallying point for everything in Belgium, the Rhine Land, and Baden, that could bear a part in a part-song. Railroad and river, the beauty of the season and the joyousness of the Festival, had tempted forth hundreds more than had been in the least expected or provided for—stout, resolved men, who would go up into the orchestra with their friends and sing! In default of sleeping accommodation, the landlords of the hotels were compelled to lay down such of their guests as did not prefer sitting up carousing—head to feet—in all the rooms of their houses. The narrow and scorching garret-accommodation, which had been purveyed for us, had to be strictly claimed and sharply watched; and when reached and occupied, it proved only a nominal seclusion from noise and bustle—the tramping of feet—the smoke of pipes—the banging of doors—and the tempest of ringing bells—which, at all times epidemic in the hotels of Cologne, on that occasion grew to a frenzy

totally unspeakable. I suppose that some sleep must have been got by us somehow; but I have not the remotest idea when, where, or how, it was managed.

The performances were held in the Gürzenich Hall—that ancient, low building which commands its street almost like a castle—and the burgher-warlike air of which is enhanced by the turrets at its corners. Odd enough, in all conscience, was the locality, as one laid out for musical performances—the room having almost every fault which persons experienced in acoustics would denounce as fatal—being too low, too ill-proportioned, and divided down its centre by a row of squat pillars. Then, of course, the orchestra offered very insufficient accommodation for the myriad of *extra* guests who had come, and would sing! But difficulties are no difficulties on certain fortunate occasions. "It was written" that this greatest of musical gatherings should also be one of the gayest. The gloomy old room had been gaily decked out for the Carnival balls of 1846, which had been held there, with that cheap but effective decoration in which the Germans so far exceed the English, and even the French. It was now

hung profusely with garlands, and looked quaint and ancient, but neither grim nor darksome. The kindly eager faces of every one concerned in the arrangement of the Festival, would of themselves have sufficed to light it up.

The arrangements in the orchestra were no less peculiar. The organ was far back in a corner, and raised above and behind the mass of singers were the ninety instruments—these including four flutes, as many oboes and bassoons, eight clarinets, two *corni di bassetto*, eight horns, eight trumpets, four keyed trumpets, six trombones, one bass *tuba*, one *ophicleide*, two pairs of drums, twenty-two *violoncellos*, and fourteen double basses. To keep all these forces in order, it was of course necessary to have a sub-conductor; further, that the music executed should not be very difficult; since the guests—especially, it was said, the uninvited ones—squeezed, and pressed, and penned together in such a narrow space—were by no means to be subjected to the usual searching care and finish of a German rehearsal. If the "full pieces" of music, in which all were employed, went on without failure, we were to be content!

All these things considered, however, the per-

formance was excellent. "The ear," I find from a note made at the time, "was not aware of the vast number of voices in the *fortes;* but in the *mezzo piano* passages, the effect was wonderfully impressive—and to those in the street without, the old Gürzenich Hall seemed crammed even to bursting with sound—but not noise." Then, the best that could be done had been done to give the *programme* of the two concerts the utmost interest. "At the first" (again to refer to my *memorandum*) "was performed 'A Prayer for the Fatherland,' written expressly for the occasion by Herr Weber, the cathedral organist; two *motetts* by Klein and one by Schneider; a rather flashy and picturesque setting of Goethe's 'Meerestille,' by Herr Fischer of Würzburg (which was *encored* violently); a short *lied* by Rochlitz; a hymn by Neithardt; a new setting of Schiller's 'An die Künstler,' written for the occasion by Dr. Mendelssohn (also *encored*); lastly, the 'Hymn to Bacchus,' from the same composer's 'Antigone'—no bad prelude to the drinking bouts which were to come when the concert was over."

The second day's meeting was the more in-

teresting of the two, because less after the style and pattern of an average and orderly concert. The separate singing societies, Flemish and German, were to be put on their mettle, and to contend for the prize, after the fashion of an ancient idyl. There was a wholesome, personal emulation and excitement in this, totally in harmony, nevertheless, with the pervading tone of concord which harmonized so vast an assemblage of scattered materials. "United Germany" (and even in 1846 "United Germany!" had become potent as a watchword, in the spell of which many generous persons conceived many magnificent visions) must for awhile be allowed to split itself up into Westphalia, Swabia, Franconia, Rhenish Prussia—and these into their several towns—and most vivacious was the desire among the parties and partisans belonging to each separate place, that "their own folk" should come well out of the singing contest. I suppose that a pugnacious and "sporting" character has not been, without some show of probability, ascribed to the Englishman. I know that it was impossible to avoid feeling hot, eager, interested (and no doubt), partial, as the exhibition went on.

This was pleasantly and poetically managed. Of course, a *liedertafel* Society would be nothing without its banner, embroidered by loving ladies; and as the parties came down separately to exhibit — the ensign of each society was brought down from the wall, and placed with a flourish of trumpets before the Conductor's desk —each squadron, it may be added, going through its exercises under the guidance of its own general.—First sang the men of Cologne, as the hosts of the festival. How they now sing, we Londoners know; but already, in 1846, they showed capital training and great power.—Next —as also, in courtesy, was due—sang the Flemish guests: a ditty far too stale and poor to have been exhibited at such a contest by the countrymen of Waelrent, and Orlando Lasso, and many another brave ancient composer of part-music. To these followed the singers of Düsseldorf; next (I find by my *memoranda*), the society from Treves, who were accused of a Frenchified taste in the selection of their *lied;* afterwards, the Elberfelders, followed by the party from Mayence, the city of the master-singers, who, as in duty and old remembrance bound, "bore away the bell," and whose part-

singing was unquestionably the most musical and highly-finished exhibition of the meeting. Next to theirs, we liked the song by the Carlsruhe Choir the best; but the audience preferred the lack-a-daisical Spanish canzonet by Reichardt, chosen by the Münster Society. After this had been encored, the Crefeld party did its best—and the whole was brought to a close with the well-known—

"Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland,"

sung with spirit enough to wake the dead, and with a geniality which every European land might have echoed without a passing heart-ache of envy. It is easy now to recollect that, before 1846, there had been head-shakings and misgivings—mutterings on the part of the Princes that these *liedertafel* societies involved a meaning more deeply and directly political than they ought to do—and mysterious whispers among the people and professors of Germany, that the time was not far off at which something nobler was to be done for "Fatherland" than singing about it—joined with the assurances, which already seem as ruefully and shabbily unreal as the cast off tinsel of a theatre, when the battle-

pageant has run its few nights—that patience, union, self-sacrifice would not be wanting on that day when the song should become a speech in man's mouth, if not a sword in man's hand. All these rumours of mistrust on the one side, and manly purpose on the other, I say, had inevitably surged past every traveller through any part of Germany, who travelled with his ears open, long before this Cologne meeting. But there, the passing stranger, at least, was glad to forget them, and, giving himself up to the hilarity of the time, and the purpose of the Festival (which was convened in aid of the works at the cathedral), could join in the chorus, which, as it were, made the bright clear air of the Rhine Land ring again, without adverting to "the cloud like a man's hand"—if, indeed, such portent of coming storm and tumult was already to be marked on the horizon!

On looking back, it seems to me that this meeting, however magnificent and animated it was, showed me, once for all, the limits of the German part-song—possibly the limits of interest which can possibly be reached by any unaccompanied chorus of merely male voices. Viewed as a musical celebration alone, the

meeting would have been found fatiguing, and deficient in variety. A part of the fatigue may have been ascribable to other causes than the monotony arising from so many short pieces, in one and the same style, being performed in succession. The serious vocal music of the German church composers will be found curiously unsatisfactory, if it be compared with parallel Italian specimens, or even the best and most solid pieces which the choir books of our own cathedrals could furnish. It may be national prejudice; but it has seemed to me, generally, harsh, mechanical, slight as regards deep or devotional expression—leaving the head dissentient and the heart cold. Then, to come to such works as more specially fall within the province of the *liedertafel* societies to execute, another remark is to be made. There is something in the tone of German tenor voices (their basses have been famous even so far back as the time of Handel) which, after a time, becomes absolutely distressing to all but German ears: a certain throaty violence, with which notes at the top of and above the average male register, are taken by force, in chest-voice, that grates doubly on an English ear, because

our English faults lie in the opposite extreme. Our artists generally fail to urge themselves sufficiently—a *suave* tone and a pleasing manner having too long been allowed to stand them in the stead of expression, accent, articulation. With the German vocalists it is all—and always—a case of urgency. It is not with them as with us, that their amateurs are apt to be more rash and violent than their professional artists; in part, perhaps, because the former have the enjoyment of pleasure, whereas the latter have merely the employment which is paid for. But it generally happens that a fierce *forte* is compensated for by a dry and toneless *piano*—every charm of light and demi-tint being destroyed as completely as every contrast is rendered. This individuality has naturally enough influenced the secular compositions most in vogue among the *liedertafel* societies. Viewed as a body, the curious union of flimsiness and effort which they present is significant. Unable, by any solid writing in four parts, to get sufficient variety, spirit, and character out of the quartett of four male voices—many devices have been tried by *instrumentalizing* the inner parts which support the melody, to give to the human tones the brilliancy and inex-

pressiveness of wind instruments.—Hence *Polonoises*, with the same sort of *staccato* bass as Bellini used so effectively in his *Polacca* in "I Puritani;" hence an air for some *solo* singer, with its support of voices murmuring through closed lips—effective when employed with a show of probability, as by Auber in his "*Chanson de la Brise*" in "Haydée" (for there the chorus is set forth as mimicking the west wind), but silly when entrusted to the companions of a lover who are to chorus his *serenade*.—The better developed *Cantata* by Mendelssohn, written for Cologne,—"The Sons of Art," from Schiller's poem,—was more integral, solid, and sterling as a piece of music; but in this the composer, calculating for a huge room and a heavy mass of voices, called in the aid of all that the coarse and poignant orchestra could do by way of accompaniment, and wrote not a song so much as a chorus, in which the massive chords and plainly grave progressions would have lost effect had they not been supported, and had they not been sung by a throng in place of a few vocalists. But a concert, made up of even works like this, must be ponderous and monotonous—the origin, in fine, of this *liedertafel* music being social

pleasure, not artistic exhibition, and the thing losing proportion, significance, and spirit, when wrested from one to the other use.

Thus much concerning the part-music, which, however, was by no means the only entertainment afforded by merry Cologne. Verily, without violently disfiguring truth in a figure of speech, its streets during those days may almost be said to have run Rhine wine, and its high places to have overflowed with champagne. Nor was the consumption of beer outside the Gürzenich Hall, by the singers who swarmed like bees round tables set in the street, assuaged by this outpouring of choicer liquors.—For once did I approach some understanding of what was required of our forefathers, in whose prime of jollity to-day's dinner lasted late into to-morrow; since, after having gone through a banquet at a German *table d'hôte*, at which every dish seemed to be doubled, and every glass thrice the usual size, and every kind soul quadruply determined to touch glasses with the two Englishmen, for some four hours, we were only let to leave the table, because new entertainers would carry us off, there and then, to a supper given to some of the strangers by

a private musical society. And the supper was like unto the dinner—nay, more arduous—for it consisted chiefly of glorious beef-steaks, and these, in plural number too, were not to be declined, even by Satiety diplomatically taking the form of honest compliment, and entreating to be allowed to listen how well an amateur orchestra was playing the overture to "Melusine." No: we might hear, but we *must* eat and drink all over again!—Strange to say, we live to tell the tale; and, stranger still, we woke without the sick reckoning of headache the morning after the feat.

Something more spiritual than this astounding conviviality was in store for us. The Cathedral, of course, was to take its part in welcoming the strangers, and gracing their festivity. On the Sunday morning, a high solemnity, in the form of the fullest musical service, was held there. This was easily manageable, without undue strain or improvisation. During the last fifteen years, there has been, I apprehend, no such celebration of the Roman Catholic orchestral Mass accessible as in the choir of Cologne Cathedral: since no where have so much skill and cost been lavished, by rendering that gorgeous rite

artistically attractive, to draw offerings to the temple. And, indeed, neither Protestant nor Catholic can at present frequent that magnificent building so much to worship as to admire; so great is the daily concourse of pilgrims of art, and so perpetual has been the excitement kept up, in regard to the possibilities of finishing the building. Time may show, whether the entire edifice will keep the promise made by the marvellous fragment that has so long and so justly been an object of rapturous admiration; Time must decide whether an expectation has not been stirred which it will be impossible completely to satisfy, or which, at all events, is not satisfied by the design to be worked out. Meanwhile, the gorgeous choir as it stands, with the flood of cheerful sunshine that streams down, tempered by the blended hues of its many-coloured windows —with its airy vaults, and its gigantic columns so light yet so robust, is not to be entered without that intense thrill of emotion, such as no everyday wonder can excite. But under the spell of such extraordinary efforts of human genius and daring, the mind is hardly still. Its mood is, perhaps, more apt to be one of aspiration rather than of prayer. Thus, every display of

another art in worship receives, in such a place, a peculiar tincture from the excitement and exaltation of the gazer's spirit. The rite, which elsewhere might become oppressive because too ornate and stately, acquires a harmonious fitness with the scene around it.

The Mass was Beethoven's Mass in C; and whether it was the glory of the locality or the glory of the music, or the welcome contrast to the ear created by the complete quartett of voices united with full orchestral accompaniments, after all that heavy male singing—I know not; but I have never been raised so high by Catholic music—artistically, be it repeated, not devotionally—as on that morning.

And here a word or two may be said regarding this Mass as a composition; in addition to the few former remarks offered;—since, while the work is perpetually in request, it is as curiously little talked of by the biographers and admirers of Beethoven, as if it was not from beginning to end full of Beethoven's self, instead of being, as some have said, written in the style of Mozart—instead of being by others (M. Berlioz among the number) considered as greatly inferior to his second Mass—such a composition

as Cherubini might have signed—and in some degree inexpressive, because (they assert) it is made up from music originally written to other words by its master. This is a hasty fancy, and a hard one.—By me, the Mass had been long known and studied, as a singularly perfect specimen of the composite style of sacred music.

In a former page, a point of particular originality and loveliness in the "*Benedictus*" of this Mass in C was noted; but I cannot resist further mentioning a passage or two, to illustrate the feeling just expressed that the work is too much "let alone," in place of its being universally cited as the finest practicable Mass in being.—And first, it may be generally remarked, that in his use of the voices throughout, Beethoven differs from his usual practice—in almost every movement silencing his orchestra here and there, to allow a full accompanied vocal harmony to be heard; and only in a single instance—the modulation on the words "*Deus Sabaoth*" in the "Sanctus"—straining his executants despotically by allotting to them passages of a dangerous or difficult crudity. In the employment, again, of voices with orchestra, the master was more felicitous, because fairer

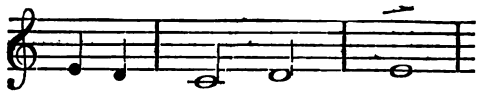
than he has elsewhere been in his union of two forces, often so idly considered antagonistic one to the other.

The "*Amen*" in the "Gloria," with its delicious contrast of airy *solo* and rich but soft chorus, is peculiarly noticeable as justifying a former remark, that Beethoven could produce the most consummate vocal effects of a ravishing beauty when he would. The "Credo" is throughout super-excellent, in the mingling of nervous and vigorous musical form, with the freest enunciation of a text most difficult to set, from the perpetual changes it includes. In particular, the treatment of the "*Qui tollis*," from the words "*sub Pontio Pilato*," must not be overlooked, as an instance of expressive writing, intense in its awe and solemnity, though without the least intermixture of theatrical effect. Strange that the poet, who could put forth powers like these, within strict limits, and under circumstances of comparative difficulty, should have failed, when a higher sweep of wing, and a more nervous grasp of emotion were allowed him, so completely as Beethoven (*for* Beethoven) failed in his "Mount of Olives,"—for there *Gethsemane*, with its awful mysteries, is brought perilously

near the foot-lights of the opera!—In the "Credo" of the Mass in C, again, there is not a bar in the "*Et resurrexit*" that will not repay study. Observe, especially, the animation introduced into that movement by the instrumental figure at "*et iterum venturus*,"—the skill with which it is suspended when the voices have to speak, and the almost colossal dignity into which it spreads and rises during the four bars of symphony, which are twice introduced to separate the clauses of the creed one from the other. There, too, we have vocal writing vindicated in its utmost freedom, while it is more than once brought near the pale of orthodox canon. Never was anything truer to the real church spirit, than the unisonal setting of the words—

"Et in unam sanctam, Catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam,"

which comes as near verbal parlance, as any example existing in Music—yet with what a gracious and simple coherence is it inwrought into the whole movement!—To the "*Benedictus*" I have adverted elsewhere.—The "Agnus" is full of remarkable points. In the restless breaking out of the words "*Agnus Dei*," with

their *tremolando* accompaniment, towards the middle of the movement, in the hurried muttered "*miserere*," which brings back the slower and more peaceful subject, may be perceived a first glimpse of that false conception which, in the corresponding portion of Beethoven's Mass in D, allowed him to bring drum and trumpet (behind the scenes as it were), in order that the prayer for Peace might be rendered significant, intense, and earnest, by the apprehension of "War's alarms." But it may be questioned whether Music contains a more perfect example of the effect made by repetition than is to be found in the use of the three notes—

towards the close of the movement, introduced as they are with a mixture of bold simplicity and picturesque surprise, such as no master, save Beethoven, has commanded.—There is nothing so new in Mozart's sacred music—nothing so sweet in the stately services of Cherubini, who is solemn, devout—but in tone, I think, less *celestial*.

Such are a few scattered hints thrown out in

regard to this fine Mass. In all human probability, it has never been executed as part of a service so finely as it was executed that morning at Cologne. In all probability it may never be heard again under similar conditions. In any event, the work and the performance make up one of the most precious musical recollections that my holidays have afforded me.

But this was not the only high artistic pleasure of which the Cathedral at Cologne was the scene during the *Männer-gesang-Fest* of 1846.

In one of the pauses betwixt music and feasting, the guests were shown all the works in completion of the *Dom*, and the workshops, in detail. The party which we were allowed to accompany was honoured by having Herr Zwirner himself (the head architect) for *Cicerone*. With what vivacity did Mendelssohn and he talk of the day when the nave should be thrown open, for which some great new composition should be written! Indeed, when we were led through the hives upon hives of Gothic ornaments ready to be placed — hundreds of grotesques, thousands of crockets, canopies, and

finials—it did not require an *Alnaschar's* imagination to conceive the whole pile raised and decorated to its full height and length, during the lives of those two strong lively men. Since that day—only half a dozen years ago—some of us have learned to feel as if nothing would be fulfilled,—as if nothing could be completed; and to associate that pile and the vast works done, and the vaster works still to do there, with those happy and hopeful visions, and their utter and untimely crumbling into dust.—Well, that was a happy day,—and those who are taken to their rest are not forgotten!

This Cologne meeting was brought to a close in the most joyous and picturesque of German fashions, by a serenade with a torch-procession to the house in which Mendelssohn was staying, and the presentation to him of a commemorative medal, with an address richly emblazoned.—It was a bright, balmy, summer night, and such darkness as the moon permitted to come down had not long set in before the *Malzbüchel*, a small irregular open space in which is the house where the composer was staying, began to be sown — set — crowded with spectators. After a short period of expectation, we heard

the distant sounds of a capital military band, and the confused hum of voices; and something like a long chain of fire-tulips came winding round the corner,—the lanterns of the serenaders taking the graceful form of flowers. — They ranged themselves beneath the window where the composer stood, and after a little singing, the hero of the night went down to thank them, and to receive the memorials and honours they brought him. I doubt if his life of many successes ever yielded him a moment which pleased and touched him more. Tears were in his eyes as he came back with the medal and the parchment: and he was too full of emotion for a moment or two to speak. But I think I now see his face beaming with its brightest and most beautiful expression, when he talked of the delight which these tokens would give to the dear ones at home; adding earnestly, and almost in a tone of deprecation, "You know I have never expected — never sought for these sort of things." And then he rallied to his usual quick and lively humour, as we looked down into the place below, and as the music and the lantern-bearers withdrew— the latter dancing as well as singing their way

home, I doubt not to some jovial supper—where more part-songs would be sung, and more Rhine wine drunk, by way of gloriously closing the great *Männer-gesang Fest* at Cologne.

Early next day the gathering broke up—a few scattered parties went up to sing on the Drachenfels; and to eat a modest dinner at the *Bellevue* at Godesberg; but these were exceptions. All was virtually over—and a few hours later still, when we found ourselves back in the midst of the London season, the sensation was much like that of those who wake from some delightful vision—and find that "behold it was a dream."

CHAPTER VII.

MADEMOISELLE LIND IN OPERA.

A prelude on one string—Railway companions—A physician of Cleves—Excitement concerning Mademoiselle Lind—Absurd rumours—The reality better than the expectation—"La Sonnambula"—Shakspeare's *Ophelia*—Mademoiselle Lind's *Julia*—Further impressions—Frantic partisanship—Mademoiselle Lind's private virtue an element in her public success—Some attempt at a character of her as an operatic artist—Her peculiar personal fascination—Her musical excellences—Nature mastered more attractive than Nature followed, in Art—Her failure in Mozart's operas (with a note on purity of tradition)—Summing up—The reasons why Mademoiselle Lind's career has been exhausting rather than quickening to Opera.

AFTER the summer's music of 1846, which had included the "Fête Dieu," at Liege, the great singing match at Cologne, and the memorable first performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" at our own Birmingham Festival,—it became almost a necessity to take a few weeks of rest, solitude, and silence; before encountering new

crowds and new enthusiasms.—My *interregnum* betwixt the English music-meeting and the Frankfort Fair, was spent in Holland; than which country a loitering place more accessible, more quaintly picturesque and more cheerfully engaging, could hardly be mentioned.—My short journey and lonely sojourn there, however, are remembered not merely as a time of refreshment singularly grateful, but also for the sake of one or two of those whimsical passages of travel and persons enjoyed on the road, that might utterly have escaped me, had I had any better company than my own weary thoughts and languid memories of the sounds of the summer. I can never recall my journey to Holland without thinking also of the people I met on my way thither who played upon "one string."

We were five in the night mail-train from London to Dover: my companions, two gentlemen and as many ladies. Into more agreeable and polished society I could not have fallen. All four were so fresh and animated as to make it evident that *they* had not drunk "the season" to its dregs: cheerfully full of anticipation, and busy in judiciously arranging all those little means and appliances with which more expe-

rienced travellers, journey by journey, increasingly dispense.

"Where's the basket, Adela?"

"Don't know: there's no room for it beside me here, at all events. *Oh, these railways with the narrow gauge!*"

There went the "one string." So immediate an *apropos* could not but promise a second sound; nor did it promise in vain. The body, soul, and spirit of these well-bred and cultivated persons were wrapt up in "Broad *versus* Narrow!" Some slight civility brought the whole question, with all its justice and injustice, its issues and bearings, its profits and losses, down upon me—"like Kedron in flood." There was no difficulty—there could be no doubt—there *should be* no mistake! "Mr. Brunel was the one engineer in the world: Messrs. Stephenson and Locke—were truly narrow-minded; the derision of Europe,—ruined or worse." So much for the cannonade of fact—but we had, also, the light artillery of feelings and fancies.—The young ladies could not sleep; owing to the narrow-gauge! Their flowers, brought that morning from beyond Exeter, began to droop, and "no wonder, with all that frightful jolting!"

Narrow gauge again!—What should they see in Belgium? Could I tell them? I mentioned Ghent with its Van Eyck picture; and Malines with its tower; and Louvain with its Town Hall; and rich Liege with its painted church; and after that the fantastic windings of the rail-road along the pretty valley of the Vesdre. I spoke of the rapid progress they would find in the works at Cologne Cathedral.—"Yes, no doubt; very interesting—they hoped it *would* be finished. But how was the stone conveyed? because, in all such cases, transit," &c., &c. Broad gauge again!—Then the conveyance of their carriage came upon the *tapis*. They were a little nervous—"did not see their way about it so clear as on their own railway." No matter what was the subject they got upon. Was it Mr. Dickens?—"They should never be able to manage to read his 'Italian Notes,' unless the railway," &c., &c., &c.—Was it Switzerland? What had the gentleman from "Geneva, the other day, been saying about the *Great Western?*"—Was it Italy?—Venice? The young ladies would "think twice about crossing the lagoon on a locomotive, unless" . . . In short, whether I was sleepy or not, I will not under-

take to decide; but I have a more than dim idea that the old idea of getting to Heaven "by the narrow way" was disparaged, on some one of the party speaking of the demise of some one else's first cousin!

I met the same quartett at two subsequent points of my holiday ramble, working hard at their controversy in "Stratford atte Bowe" French, or composite German, for the enlightenment of civil and patient neighbours at *tables d'hôte*. Mr. A——'s speech in Parliament; Mr. B——'s beautiful estate ploughed across by that paltry *Kettleby* and *Crutched Minster* line;—praise of Mr. C——'s pamphlet, and withering scorn of Mr. D——'s base article in a Quarterly Review (every one knew how many shares had been given to him for writing it)—and this seemed the sole topic, the sole occupation and enjoyment, of four people as considerate and refined as one could wish to meet *off* the rail. They had got up their subject with such a vengeance at home, that not even sea-sickness nor auditors who spoke neither French nor English, nor the abominations of Papistry, could supersede it, or discourage their enthusiasm!

Scarcely a fortnight after this, I fell in with a yet

more egregious performer on one string—quite of a different order: a zealous young physician, with whom I made half a day's journey betwixt Cleves and Düsseldorf. Every one knows what a sailor's "working his passage" is. This gentleman might have been prescribing to the value of his place in the *coupé* of the droning, dusty diligence; and to those who are "*used* at rattling bones to start," and who would almost as soon suffer a surgical operation as hear one described cranch by cranch, slash by slash, his conversation was more awful than agreeable.—I was full of Cleves, with its picturesque old castle, and its still woods, from which steal avenues of fine trees within the barriers of the town, and should have liked to discuss the place with some intelligent inhabitant. My *Galen*, however, could only talk of ailments, operations, interesting colics, and attractive eye cases. I allowed it to leak out that I had been detained at Amsterdam by fever. "He would prescribe for me: yes. Should I *see* him my tongue?" (He spoke a little English.) Meeting, alas! with obdurate rejection, he began upon the Conductor of the diligence; and after plying that worthy hard, elicited the fact that he owned to a little girl whose hearing was

sometimes confused. "She should boil a tea for her ears; he would tell her how"—and out came the pencil, and a leaf was begged from my memorandum-book (he would not tear his own), and the receipt was down in a trice—two pipes full of tobacco being claimed for his fee. All along the road, wherever the vehicle halted (and Patience can only number the places and pretexts for halting), out sprung my Doctor—up staircases, down courts—never contented till he had nosed out some new case, laid his remedy, and, I presume, received payment in kind; since, as we advanced, there severally broke out from his pockets two huge apples, a deadly looking and aged cake, the leg of a cold fowl freshly mangled, and a bottle of wine. He went the round of the passengers in the *beichaise* (or supplementary carriage); and at the place where we nooned, I caught him shaking the contents of a little blue paper into the soup of two dyspeptic-looking gentlewomen, who were too apathetic and much afraid to say "*Nay*" to his nimble assiduities.—Crossing the bridge at Düsseldorf, I saw him seize a soldier by the ear, whispering into it, I have no doubt, the secret of some particularly brave and

"venomous" pill; and I have never ceased wondering, from that day to this, whenever his image has turned up, whether, on taking the railway for Elberfeld, he did or did not attempt to exhibit his mystery, and prove himself worth, not his salt, but his hot water and coke, by offering to look down the throats of the old locomotives afflicted with wheezing. Except for *his* one string—I suppose, by rights, it should be called a ligature—how should I recollect my Doctor of Cleves?

Such passing adventures, and the brain-crotchets that they breed, are precious companions and aids to the solitary traveller. But what was the warm partizanship of my countrymen to the gauge elect—what was the professional single-mindedness of the *Galen* of Cleves, as a performance on one string—compared with the stupendous unison which awaited me in the Rhine Land, from Düsseldorf up to Mannheim?—the theme being everywhere and always Mdlle. Jenny Lind.—That was the year of the great Spanish match, for which the late King of the French perilled so much. Yet the Duke de Montpensier's hymeneals, and their possible bearing upon the balance of power in

European politics, came second as a topic to Jenny Lind.—Stirring changes, too, were just then expected to happen in Papal Italy: the chimerical idea that St. Peter's representative could and would make common cause with the private judgment of the People, had got fast hold of many sanguine persons; but what was this compared in importance to the question whether Jenny Lind had or had not quarrelled with the King of Prussia, and turned off his theatre in absolute disdain?—Free Trade, again, was beginning to trouble the Germans, as an idea too large to be shut out, too sensible to be let in; but though Mr. Cobden was a great man, his greatness was small, and easily decided, as compared with that of Jenny Lind.—Nay, even that question of questions, that dream of dreams, that hobby of hobbies — the formation and maintenance of a German Fleet—over which so much had been said and sung, and (till then) so little spent, was taken up and laid by as the standing dish to which every one might return when any one pleased—dull and tasteless as regards interest, if any one had a new green-room fact to tell concerning "*Die Nachtwändlerin*," or "*Die Regiment's Tochter*"—any new

prophecy regarding the matrimonial plans of the cynosure of eyes and hearts, great and small, noble and burgher, learned or landlord, musical or moral—Jenny Lind; and still, and after that again, talk of no one but Jenny Lind!

One would like to think that some de Sevignè, or Grimm, or Walpole, had noted down, for our children's diversion, a tithe of the anecdotes with which the entire Continent was then ringing, regarding the Swedish *soprano*, and which attached to her movements a lustre and a curiosity and a *prestige*, totally independent of her musical merits, that hardly seem to belong to times the boast of which is that they are sane and unpoetical. Whereas, before Paganini came, every one delighted to add some new story of *diablerie* to those which gave his pale face, and meagre figure, and epileptic attitudes when playing, a supernatural interpretation,—every new panegyrist of Mdlle. Lind's *Amina*, or *Alice*, produced yet another plea in favour of the artist, by publishing some fresh instance of simplicity, unworldliness, gentleness, beneficence "that blushes unseen"—till the amount of admiration, when launched against one's musical sympathies, became heavy to positive oppres-

sion. For an oppression some of us felt the assumption conveyed by all this praise, advertisement, and illustration, of private worth, modesty, and unconscious virtue—that the same were attributes and qualities which, till Mdlle. Lind came, had been unheard of in the annals of musical life.

Apart from all these newspaper stories—so dear to the tribe of Barnum, and such other coarse speculators—musical witnesses, foremost among whom were Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, had promulgated such high praise of Mdlle. Lind, as the only great songstress who had been heard in Germany for many a long year, that the Frankfort Opera, where she was to sing at the holiday time in question, naturally became a place of no ordinary curiosity to the musical traveller. Then for those who wished to hear Mdlle. Lind, it was necessary to go to Frankfort—since there was not a person, in 1846, who had speech with, or who possessed the secret of Mdlle. Lind, that was not convinced, by her own solemn assertions again and again repeated, that to England she would never come. Disturbed in her conscience, it was said, at having made an ill-advised engagement to sing in

one august party from this little capital, or the other distant watering-place, who, like myself, had come to Frankfort expressly to hear Mdlle. Lind before she left the stage. Thanks to the providence of that inimitable character, a thorough German landlord—and the courtesy which I, at least, have found unfailing, in travelling through the country—a good seat was found for me. But the prelude was not played out – the curtain not drawn up — even then. The day before she was expected to arrive, out broke the fatal news that Mdlle. Lind had suddenly thrown up her engagement in consequence of fatigue and illness—that she was gone into Switzerland to refresh her health—that she was not coming to Frankfort at all !—Who could doubt, after this, that the Lady must be a great singer? Gabrielli's freakish self, whose freaks have kept her name alive in the history of Music, could hardly have ventured a higher stroke of self-assertion.—Next came the tale to table, how indefatigable Herr Guhr, who then was the musical director of the Frankfort Opera, had taken chaise and four, under the cloud of night, in pursuit of Mdlle. Lind, to persuade her to postpone her illness till after she had

fulfilled her engagement to the famishing people of Frankfort. His journey, at all events, proved to be no fable. In due time Herr Guhr returned, with cheering news for a public all but maddened by the sudden loss of its idol. Mdlle. Lind was positively coming—not just then, however, but in three weeks' time. —Here was oil upon the waters!—an unhoped-for reprieve!—a piece of consideration and condescension how far more attractive than the punctuality of any artist, who could only keep her fixed day like any other common creature! If average enthusiasm could resist being fascinated by this flight, German enthusiasm, at least, could not. — So with cheerful hearts the waiters upon Mdlle. Lind disposed themselves hither and thither—some to Homburg—some to Stuttgart, to witness the bringing home of the Crown-Princess, then a bride—some to emulate the *prima donna*, and make a dash at Switzerland—until the fourteen days were over. They came to an end at last; and, this time, Mdlle. Lind *did* keep to her engagement.—I saw and heard her at Frankfort, in German translations of Donizetti's "La Figlia del Reggimento," Spontini's "La Vestale," and Bellini's "Sonnambula."

That any song could bear out the promise of such a symphony as I have described was hardly to be hoped for. But need it be told that Mdlle. Lind's singing could be no disappointment, to any one who had endeavoured, out of all this parade of exaggerated rapture, to pick such facts as had enabled him beforehand to form some idea of the quality of her voice and of her special musical excellences? It is only those who have no clear appreciating powers, or who think it cold and cruel to desire precise information, that find themselves disappointed with Venice, or with St. Peter's at Rome; or with any other far-famed thing of beauty.—In hearing Mdlle. Lind at Frankfort, I found, as usual, the reality far better than the expectation. I had been prepared for the unevenness of her voice—for the weakness and veil upon the octave below D, as contrasted with the octave above; but it proved more powerful, with all its possible softness and sweetness, than I had expected. I had been told that Mdlle. Lind's executive power was great; but I was surprised in her application of ornament, in "La Figlia del Reggimento"—by a daring and freshness, mixed up with the reported brilliancy, which proved

that she could create as well execute embellishments. I had heard that her skill as an actress of certain parts was considerable; but no one had described to me those touches in her acting of those parts which, whether arrived at by thought or hit upon by impulse, were as poetical as they were peculiar. For instance, in the last scene of "La Sonnambula," Mdlle. Lind's slow, sad, half-conscious destruction of the flowers so long cherished in her bosom,—which she let drop, leaf by leaf, as the lament, "Ah, non credea," went wandering and wailing on—came home at once as a beautiful, fanciful, and melancholy invention, justifying the warmest praise and the highest hope, and calling up those dreams and associations which only genius, as distinct from talent, can call up. Who could see and hear that scene, without thinking of Shakspeare's lady—

"of ladies most deject and wretched"—

with her flowers, and her snatches of old northern melody, and her desolate fate? I will leave calmer critics to decide, whether it is in the province of Art, that, while a songstress is presenting *Amina*, she should suggest *Ophelia:* *

* As another illustration of the occasional felicity of conception which distinguished the acting of Mdlle. Lind, I may mention a

but—in spite of the chorus of Swiss peasants on the stage, and the canonically tumble-down and tattered mill in the back-ground (the state whereof tells as manifestly of the run of the opera as of the scene-painter's taste)—there stood and sung *Ophelia*, the maiden loved and left by

point in her *Lucy of Lammermoor*. This was in that scene in the second act of Donizetti's opera, where the heroine's ruthless brother thrusts upon her the letter which makes her believe *Ravenswood* faithless, and acquiesce in breaking the contract sworn to him beside the Mermaiden's Fountain. The actress at first merely glanced at the paper and devoured its contents; then, like one resolute to wake herself from some abominable dream, she constrained herself, anew unfolded the fatal document, and deliberately possessed herself of its meaning. From that moment, however, her reason was destroyed, as well as her will broken. The frenzy of her last fearful scenes (as M. Berlioz subtly remarked) was then indicated and prepared for. This might not be Scott's *Lucy Ashton* (indeed, Mdlle. Lind's whole treatment of the character was too loud, too ungentle, too wildly tragical for our idea), but it amounted to dramatic creation.—That some such appreciation of Mdlle. Lind's peculiar gifts may have occurred to those who watched her closely, and judged her finely, is proved, I think, by Mendelssohn having chosen "Loreley" as the subject of the first opera he meditated, the *finale* of which (its only complete portion) makes it evident that of Mdlle. Lind he thought, while writing the *soprano* part. There the mournful desolateness of *Ophelia*, and the distraction of *Lucy*, were to be set in a framework of fantastic and supernatural influences. It is difficult to conceive the scene fully rendered by any one else save her for whom it was written.

Hamlet: the most mournful, and almost the sweetest, of Shakspeare's creations.—But even more than by Mdlle. Lind's *Amina* was I struck by her singing and personation of *Julia* in Spontini's "La Vestale."

I shall never cease to regret that this fine opera was not given in England before Mdlle. Lind left the stage; since she might have broken the curious spell of indifference in which our public has always remained regarding it, and have kept off the menaced exhaustion of our repertory by the present of one masterpiece more. Though the northern face could not look the part of the Roman vestal virgin,—its owner obviously found something sympathetic, and to which her powers were thoroughly adequate, in the story. Her stolen inverview with her lover in the temple, her heroic deliverance of him from peril, her detection by the side of the forgotten altar on which the flame had expired, and her terror, at once superstitious and womanly, under the tremendous *anathema* which closes the scene, gave scope to her finest acting.—She was there as original, powerful, and impressive, as she was weak and conventional in "Norma." If the classical spirit was wanting, the struggle of the

virgin's heart was present. It was a character, too, in which few of the present generation could compare her to any great singer—the opera, like all Spontini's operas, having been generally avoided by highly cultivated vocalists of the Italian school.

Such were my first impressions of Mdlle. Lind, strong enough it will be owned to delight the most exacting; and of a quality totally separate from and superior to any that I have before or since received in the opera-houses of Germany. Nor had I any occasion to regard them as delusions; but it is no less true that they received few subsequent additions. The limit of Mdlle. Lind's general conception of character was reached on those three evenings; and later, the reproduction of the same spirit in comedy, in sentimental drama, and in serious tragedy (however it might now and then be varied by episodical features of invention), left judgment more free than judgment should be in the theatre, to consider, to arrange, and to weigh the value of her operatic gifts, graces, and shortcomings.

Backhuysen himself, however, who is reputed to have put to sea whenever foul weather

was coming on, in search of materials for pictures, can hardly have studied his subjects under a more stormy atmosphere than that which surrounded Mdlle. Lind during her entire stage career; and which made the taking of notes and the registering of attributes a service of peril to any one more desirous of Truth than of Fashion. It seems already like a dream to recollect, that, so lately as four years ago, in London, all discussion of the gifts of this great singer—or any attempt to range her among the brilliant list of dramatic vocalists in which Pasta stands the first and greatest—was simply impossible. So many sympathies and party interests got mixed up with the merits and popularity of Mdlle. Lind, that to hint that the lower octave of her voice was veiled, was considered as the attack of a *Mephistopheles* upon her charity; while to speak amiss of her *Norma* was rated by new opera-goers (who had broken vows against wicked opera-going in favour of so much virtue) as a black and covert defence of all manner of iniquity in art.—There was as prurient a curiosity to illustrate the new singer's most private virtues as something celestial, by prying, and fetching and carrying

anecdotes, as has been shown in the case of those unhappily suspected, when prosecuting antipathy has been interested to prove them unchaste mothers, unnatural fathers, bankrupt citizens, and in every transaction, great or small, so many falsehoods and failures.

These follies were too openly and intimately displayed, at the close of the great period of German music, to which these pages refer, to be left out of its record. But ridiculous as they were in those indulging them—mischievous to Art, as encouraging the depreciation of every other artist living and dead, that the idol might shine brighter and look taller by contrast—and strangely disturbing as they were of peace and good understanding in private society—the fact is not to be gainsaid, that during her short career on the opera stage, Mdlle. Lind exercised over the majority of her audience a peculiar fascination. Something of this, of course, was owing to the reputation for virtue and simplicity, which had been so wondrously advertised — something to the uncertainty of her movements. Something also belonged to her presence; to the intense and unworldly, if not supernatural expression of her counte-

nance, which held fast many an eye that soon tires of regular beauty, or of features the smile or the sorrow of which may be read at a glance. With all her apparently direct and simple truthfulness in presenting herself to her audience, there was in Mdlle. Lind's aspect something eager and deep, and mysterious, which called up visions of *Undine* with her new-born humanity, and of a thousand other legends of the North, in which winds, and waters, and groves, have their speech and their part, and where their spirits are permitted to mingle in the play of mortal passion. Were we to fall into the humour of that mystical nonsense which is again taking its turn as a drawing-room excitement, this sudden and singular attractiveness of Mdlle. Lind, apart from all personal beauty, might be at once classed, analyzed, and tabulated. I might tell to which Angel of which Planet the charm was due, as historically as it can be told how Signor Manuel Garcia trained her voice. But I can only record the share which personality had in the success of Mdlle. Lind as an actress, without in the least professing to give the *formula* of the spell. Other of her weapons of conquest may be touched more closely and certainly.

Perhaps, in music, Mdlle. Lind's most excellent attribute has been her wonderful power over *sostenuto* tone, in every degree of force. There seemed no end to those long peculiar notes, so full, so soft, yet so fascinating—the employment of which, no less than their quality, was eminently calculated to deceive the ear, as to their place on the scale. Then, though never was voice more exquisitely under its owner's command, Mdlle. Lind's upper notes had a certain effort in their production, which, when it is accompanied by unfaltering mastery, never fails to enhance the value of the thing produced. However exquisite be such a bird-like volubility as Madame Cinti Damoreau's, it is not so brilliant as the rich and firm and *vanquishing* execution of an artist like Pasta, by whom every note is shaped, and rounded, and measured, so as to acquire a meaning and a value. Spontaneity is a delicious thing in singing—but it is curiously seldom accompanied with solidity or real sentiment; and without these the neatest *staccato*, or the most voluble *roulade*,—the most unimpeachable chromatic scale, the most dashing *arpeggio*, or the most warbling shake, will never satisfy the ear, nor mark such

traces on the memory, as were made by Pasta's singing of "Il soave e bel contento," or by Mdlle. Lind's "Ah! non credea," in "La Sonnambula," or by her last prayer at the grave-side as *Julia* in "La Vestale" of Spontini.

It is curious to note, as an illustration of that capriciousness which has had no common share in the command exercised by Mdlle. Lind over her public,—that the same vocalist who could draw such an effect of power from music neither commanding in its science nor delicious in its melody, seemed to lose half her vocal supremacy on the stage, when music such as Mozart's was the question. As *Susanna* in "Figaro," while the acting of Mdlle. Lind was busy and spiritless (neither that of the lady nor of the lady's maid), her singing was anxious, monotonous, bald, and formal — without enjoyment, and, it seemed, without sympathy for her task. Throughout that opera, the impression made on me was that of one perpetually saying: "*Hear, how very conscientiously I am singing Mozart!*" "*Admire how determined I am not to commit the slightest appoggiatura.*" Her very gradations of tone seemed to be laid aside, in obedience to

this false notion of classicality. That firm yet easy elasticity, that graceful propriety (how different from audacious self-assertion, or from servile self-effacement!), which make Madame Sontag's singing of Mozart a study, for all who are in quest of the true tradition,* were totally

* That the Vienna tradition of singing Mozart's operas does not bind the vocalist to a bald and literal enunciation of the text and nothing but the text, we have had proofs in the singing of Madame van Hasselt-Barth, Madame Jenny Lutzer, and, most recently, Mdlle. Zerr—all vocalists formed in Mozart's own town, and who may naturally be supposed to possess some idea of the manner of executing his operas, sanctioned and provided for by himself. But this newly fashioned edict, in command of an utter and servile plainness, which, if carried out, would utterly destroy all the singer's individuality in art, seems to me to receive contradiction from the music of Mozart itself—even if we had not tradition to confirm us—even if we did not know that Mozart wrote for singers, who were nothing without their changes and their closes. That to apply ornament unsparingly would be an insolence—that to employ it out of place and out of style is a musical offence, to be repudiated by all musical people—are facts which by no means imply that to apply and employ it *at all* are cardinal sins. It is the promulgation of such a canon by modern Pedantry, which has caused one-half of the transgressions found so nauseous by severe folks and purists who are never so complacent as when they can "make *those* singers keep in their right places." Without some discretionary taste, delicately and scientifically exercised by the *Susanna*, the *Zerlina*, the *Fiordiligi*, the *Pamina*, of Mozart's operas, I am satisfied that no performance of his music is classical—otherwise in conformity with

wanting to Mdlle. Lind's delivery of the music of "Figaro." From the time—it appears to me—when she became fully alive to the extraordinary power which she could exercise, of her sole self, in music of a far inferior order, she became averse to merging the sorceress in the interpreter—avoided, more and more distinctly, all operas in which there was anything like combination or contrast of female characters, multiplicity of parts,

his intentions.—For the satisfaction of the cavillers, let it be added that such permissions by no means apply to the vocal productions of all the great German composers. Gluck wrote in control of—Beethoven in antagonism to—his singers; and in the music of either (the *Rondo* from "Orfeo" forming, perhaps, the exception), the addition of even an *appoggiatura* would be intolerable. Mendelssohn, again, wrote so as to allow no space or exercise of fancy for the vocal embroiderer; and thus, to alter or add to his music, would be to injure it, by showing an arrogant disloyalty to the master's wishes and meanings. Nevertheless I well recollect the quiet smile of pleasure with which even Mendelssohn used to receive a shake exquisitely placed in the second verse of his delicious "Frühlingslied" (Op. 47); and it must not be forgotten, by all who desire to see the question fairly argued out, and illustrated by facts, not dogmas, that the first singer of *Elijah* in Mendelssohn's *Oratorio*—Herr Staudigl—was sanctioned, in one of the finest pieces of dramatic *recitative* which the work contains, to heighten the effect, by substituting one note for another—the upper G flat, I mean, in place of D flat—in the scene with *Baal's* priests, on the last repetition of the words "*Call him louder.*"

or contest of emotions — all theatres in which rivalry might be apprehended—all music in which creation did not redound to her instantaneous glory and unquestioned supremacy. Such *phenomena* were to be seen during Mdlle. Lind's theatrical career, as the execution of Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," with the omission of the entire two acts containing the part of *Princess Isabella*, for the purpose of exhibiting her *Alice* in the fullest relief. "I cannot think," said Mendelssohn, when speaking of her in his most enthusiastic manner, "why she always prefers to be in the bad theatre:" adding, after a moment's pause, "and she sings bad music the best,—which is odd."

Not odd, methinks, to those who have considered the lady, her genius, and her career, dispassionately, and as legitimate objects of examination and comparison; and who admit that there is a genius which can only find its field of operation in monopoly and exhaustion—in an incessant search for those most feverish emotions and violent sensations—an unbroken course of which cannot come naturally, nor be maintained, without a heavy price paid somewhere, or by some one. These bystanders, without in the slightest

degree undervaluing Mdlle. Lind's rare powers and high accomplishments as a singer—without for a moment questioning the peculiar hold on public sympathy possessed by her—must have come to the conclusion that her own illustration, not the advancement of her art, was her one great motive throughout her operatic career; and that effect, not reality, was the object ever present to her ambition. Hence the curiously narrow limits of her repertory — hence her frequent migrations from theatre to theatre —hence, in part, that mistrust of, and disinclination to, the stage, which led her so early and finally (as it is understood) to relinquish the opera-house for the concert-room.—That a genius such as I have characterized, is but a genius of the second order — whatever be its physical appliances — whatever be its technical acquirements — Posterity will hardly question. That to say so contemporaneously is no sacrilege, I feel satisfied — whatever be the private virtues of the artist: since every hour of irrational idolatry wears away something of its sincerity from public judgment; and thus bears *upon* the career of

artists to come, essentially not less worthy to please than Mdlle. Lind, but more scantily endowed with the power of putting every gift out to compound interest.

THE LAST DAYS

OF

MENDELSSOHN.

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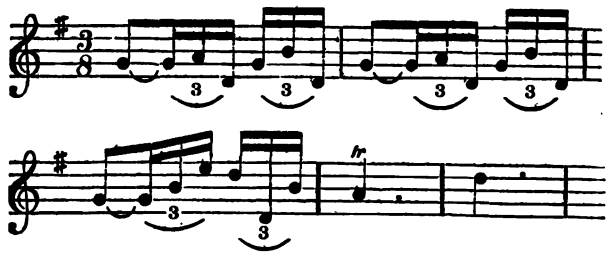
The last chapter a sad labour—Interlachen in 1847—Change in Mendelssohn's appearance—Walk up to the Hohenbühl—Rossini's "Guillaume Tell"—Plans for new musical compositions—His painful misgivings—The music composed by Mendelssohn at Interlachen—His opera-projects—His anxiety about foreseen troubles in Germany—His Swiss drawings—Shocking piano—Organ playing at Ringgenberg; his last performance—His interest in Italian music—Up to Lauterbrunnen—The fall of the Staubbach—Mendelssohn's death—The tone of the Leipsic public after his death—Some attempt to characterise his genius in composition—The theory of the decline of Music ill-based—Mendelssohn's activity and conscientiousness—His melody—His variety—His devotional elevation—His orchestral skill—His resolution to make progress—*Dis aliter visum!*—Conclusion.

THE last chapter of a record of holidays, each one of which has been marked with some new pleasure, is of itself a mournful one to write. It becomes doubly so, when its subject is a

last meeting with one whose death in the prime of every blessing which makes life desirable has stripped holiday-time to come of its freshest musical interest and chiefest hope. There are many besides myself to whom Germany and German music are gravely, perhaps irreparably, changed by the untimely death of Mendelssohn.

I passed the three last days of August, 1847, beside him at Interlachen in Switzerland, very shortly before his return to Leipsic, and that fatal attack of illness which ended in his death there on the fourth of November. He looked aged and sad;—and stooped more than I had ever before seen him do; but his smile had never been brighter, nor his welcome more cordial. It was early in the morning of as sunny and exhilarating a day as ever shone on Switzerland, that we got to Interlachen; and then and there I must see the place and its beauties.—"We can talk about our business better out of the house:"—and forth we went,—at first up and down under the walnut trees, in sight of the *Jungfrau*, until, by degrees, the boarding-houses began to turn out their inhabitants. Then we struck off through the wood to a height called, I

think, the *Hohenbühl*, commanding the lake of Thun and the plain with Neuhaus and Unterseen,—with the snow mountains all around us. It was while we were climbing up to this nook that the tinkling of the cow-bells, which adds to, rather than takes away from, the solitude of mountain scenery, came up from some pasture-land not far off. My companion stopped immediately, listened, smiled,—and began to sing



from the *overture* to "Guillaume Tell." "How beautifully Rossini has found that!" he exclaimed. "All the introduction, too, is truly Swiss.—I wish I could make some Swiss music. —But the storm in his *overture* is very bad!" And he went off again into the pastoral movement: speaking afterwards of Swiss scenery with a strength of affection that almost amounted to passion. "I like the pine-trees, and the very smell of the old stones with the moss upon

them." Then he told, with almost a boyish pleasure, of excursions that he had taken with his happy party of wife and children. "We will come here every year, I am resolved. How pleasant it is to sit talking on this bench, with the glorious *Jungfrau* over there, after your Hanover-square Rooms in London!"

But Mendelssohn must needs be drawn back into the concert-room, even at Interlachen. A new composition for the opening of the magnificent Concert Hall in Liverpool had been proposed to him; and this was to be talked over. He had already a new *Cantata* in view, I think, for Frankfort; and mentioned some text from "Die Herrmannschlacht" of Klopstock, as the subject which he had selected. "But that," he said, with his own merry laugh, "would never do for Liverpool. No: we must find something else." He spoke of Napoleon's passage of the Alps as an event he wanted to see arranged for music—again repeating, "I must write something about this country—but that, again, will not do for England!"—I mentioned Wordsworth's ode on "The Power of Sound," as a noble poem full of pictures, from which, perhaps, portions might be detached fit for a composer's purposes; but he

seemed to treat the idea of describing the various effects of music in music as too vague and hackneyed; and moreover objectionable, as having been done completely by Handel, in his "Alexander's Feast." Then he began to fear that he could get nothing ready by the time mentioned —"for you know," he went on, "something of mine is to be sung in the *Dom* at Cologne, when the nave is thrown open—That will be an opportunity!—But I shall not live to see it!" and he paused, and put his hand to his head, with a sudden expression of weariness and suffering.

He had composed much music, he said, since he had been at Interlachen; and mentioned that stupendous *quartett* in F minor which we have since known as one of the most impassioned outpourings of sadness existing in instrumental music—besides some English service-music for the Protestant church. "It has been very good for me to work," he went on, glancing for the first time at the great domestic calamity (the death of Madame Hensel), which had struck him down, immediately on his return from England; "and I wanted to make something sharp and close and strict" (interlacing his fingers as he spoke) —"so that church-music has quite suited me.

Yes: I have written a good deal since I have been here—but I must have quiet, or I shall die!"

I will not swear to the very order of words which Mendelssohn spoke,* but that day is too brightly printed in my memory, for a topic, or a trait, or a characteristic expression, to be forgotten. Life has too few such.

In answer to my inquiries concerning the opera on which he was understood to be engaged, he spoke long and freely concerning the theatre, and his own plans and purposes with respect to it. "The time has come when I must try what I can do," was his language, "and after I have written four or five operas, perhaps I shall make something good. But it is so difficult to find a subject."—Then he discussed many which had been proposed to him; speaking in the strongest manner of the unauthorised use of his name,† which had been

* I may be permitted, however, to say that his use of English was much after the manner described. He understood and wrote our language thoroughly well; the slight touch of the foreigner in his speaking made it all the more racy. Sometimes his epithets were most precious. I remember once his venting his displeasure against a songstress whose behaviour had offended him, by declaring that "she was like an arrogant cook."

† It is more than possible that the subject had been suggested to M. Scribe, out of deference to Mendelssohn's known pre-

made in London by announcing "The Tempest" as having been commenced by him with a view to its performance at a given period. "The book is too French," he said, "and the third act is thoroughly bad. I would not have touched the opera till all that had been entirely

dilection for it. Years before, Shakspeare's play had been arranged by Herr Immermann, as an opera for Mendelssohn to set; but then, also, unsuccessfully. The difficulty of throwing the interest of action and situation into the principal characters, such as should in any degree compensate for the omission of the exquisite poetry to which their thoughts, fancies, and feelings are *set to music* by Shakspeare—was felt, I suspect;—though not the point of making the composer perceive that the subject is essentially intractable for Opera, save in the somewhat melodramatic form preferred by the French. No "intrigue" (to use the technical phrase) presents itself in the persons and relative position of *Prospero*, *Ferdinand*, and *Miranda*;—and hence the French dramatist, true to his principle, that a play is no play, and an opera no opera, without an intrigue, was driven to expand the idea of *Caliban's* odious persecution of the magician's daughter; and to produce a tissue of scenes, which, if they had been acted in place of being evaded, no English audience, at least, would have endured to witness. The difficulty of reconciling his dreams with the requisitions of the stage and the necessities of musical form—his aversion to every thing hazardous and flagrant, yet his impatience of undramatic insipidity and dullness—were among the chief causes why Mendelssohn never wrote for the theatre. He may have been as much too curious in waiting for the faultless *libretto* which never would have come, as Rossini was too ready in setting any book and every book, which contained a few airs, duetts, and a *finale*.

altered. — And I never would tie myself to time in such a hasty manner! No; when I have finished something, I dare say that I shall get it produced some where." He then went on to talk over other Shakspearian subjects; in particular "The Winter's Tale;" a sketch from which had been laid before him: — this seemed in some degree to have engaged his liking. "Something very merry," said he, "could be made with *Autolycus*." How merry he could have made it, the world has since learned by the publication of his *operetta*, in which the knavish *Pedlar Kauz* plays so notable a part. Truer comedy does not exist in German music—not even in the most comical portions of Mozart's "Die Entführung,"—than the dancing song of this precious knave, or the part taken by him in the serenade of the village girl, with its sentimental caricature of the German watchman's droning call.

"We have no one in Germany who can write opera books," Mendelssohn continued. "If Kotzebue had been alive . . . *he* had ideas!" and he warmed himself up as he talked, by recalling how a prosaic occasion of mere parade —the opening of the new theatre at Pesth—

could inspire Kotzebue with such a characteristic invention as his "Ruins of Athens," so good for Beethoven to set. "Well; I must do my best with 'Loreley,' for Geibel has taken great trouble with the poem. We shall see." And then, again, he broke off suddenly, and put his hand to his head. "But what is the use of planning anything? I shall not live."

Who could attend to such a foreboding in one apparently so full of energy, and forecast, and enterprise? I confess that I ascribed it mainly to the impression left by the fearful trial which Mendelssohn had recently sustained in the loss of the sister to whom he was so tenderly attached.—Other painful ideas seemed to rise before him. He spoke with more fear than hope of the fermenting state of opinion in Germany, and its disastrous influences upon morals, education, good citizenship—on all that keeps society sound and makes home happy. He dwelt on the impatience of duty—on the sympathy shown to error and license—on the disregard of obligation—on the difficulties preparing for Germany by such perverse and preferred lawlessness among the middle classes—with tears in his eyes: for never was man of any

country more sincerely, affectionately national. He spoke, too, and bitterly, of the folly and falsehood of those in high places, who had alienated the hearts which they might so easily have attached, and who had demoralized under pretext of educating a great people; giving illustrations, instances, anecdotes (which I need not say are sacred), with a nervous earnestness which showed how seriously and apprehensively his bright and quick mind had been at work on these subjects.—Then he turned to his own future plans. I had often before heard him discuss that point in every artist's career, at which retirement from close personal intercourse with the public is desirable, but never so emphatically as that day. He was determined to give up presenting himself to the public so freely as he had done. "When one is no longer young, one should not go about playing and concert giving,"—and he expressed his strong wish, almost amounting to an intention, of settling down somewhere in the Rhine Land, not in any town, there to devote himself more eagerly than ever to composition. "I shall be near England," he added, "and can come over as often as you wish; and I shall be within reach

of our towns with all these new railroads; but I must live quietly, and get rid of all that noise and interruption, if I *am* to live." And again was repeated the mournful presage; and the glow faded from his face, and the sad, worn look came back which it pained the very heart to see.

Later in the day, I was shown, with eager pleasure, the drawings made by him at Interlachen; for he drew landscapes faithfully, if not altogether gracefully, though in colour "*that green*" was owned by him to be a stumbling-block. I was shown, too, his piano—"a shocking thing," as he called it; "but I am so glad that there was no decent piano in Interlachen! This will do to try a chord when I want it; but I do not wish to make finger-music."—And he touched it—the last time that I heard him touch a piano—that I might hear what an old kettle it was!

We were bound for Fribourg; and I asked him much about Mooser's famous organ. He said that he had heard wonders concerning its *vox-humana* stop. "How odd," he continued, "that such an expressive thing, which can almost talk, should be made merely of two bits of wood." I pressed him earnestly to go on with us, and try this marvel for himself. "No," he said,

laughingly, "those organists always like no one to play but themselves. There is always some difficulty:—and then there is the noise! I must give up organ-playing—and besides Winter is coming, and we had better draw quietly homewards." There was some talk, too, of his being obliged soon to make a professional journey to Vienna, which further limited his time. In short, never had I seen him so full of plans; and surely never, in the annals of any art, had artist more honourably arrived at well merited and universal fame.—Vanity of vanities!

The second day of our stay at Interlachen was cloudy, with occasional torrents of rain: all the mountains were "straitly shut up." Mendelssohn spent nearly the whole day with us; indeed, I never was near him without being reminded of what we are told of Sir Walter Scott, that he was as lavish of goodwill and time in the entertainment of his friends as if he had had no earthly other thing to do. When and how he managed to write, were not easy to discover. He spoke again of Fribourg; and, for half an hour, relented, and *would* go there with us;—and then, when he relapsed into his less enterprising resolution, he offered us, instead,

some playing on a poor little organ that very day. He had stumbled upon a solitary village on the lake of Brienz, to which there was no proper road—he had found the church door open, and the organ open, and nobody "to prevent him," and had been up there to play once or twice. The beauty and loneliness of the place, and the easy access to the instrument, had taken strong hold of his imagination. He would take us there that afternoon, and make a little music for us.

It was a gray, sullen, cold day, with passing showers, making an awning necesary for the boat; for by boat only could we get to Ringgenberg. There is something curiously secluded and quiet in the aspect of its little gray church, which stands on a knoll close to the lake, and is approached by rude steps carpeted with maiden hair and moss and the small-leaved clinging ivy. That day, too, as before, the church door chanced to be open; and the organ was accessible. It is the work of a Vallaisan maker — not super-excellent in tone, it may be supposed; but its pretty, gay-looking case, nevertheless, gives a certain air of splendour and fascination to that remote place of peasant-worship. A peasant boy was presently

found willing, for a few *batzen*, to blow the bellows as long as Mendelssohn liked; and he sat down,—I have since learned, for the last time that he ever sat down to an organ—for the pleasure of his three auditors.—It seems to me now as if he never could have played more nobly. After one or two movements by Sebastian Bach, he began an improvisation in C minor, which took the canonical form of a prelude and *fugue:* his fancy kindling as he went on, and his face lit up by that serene and elevated smile, the highest and most beautiful of its many expressions, which all who knew him must remember,—while he drew forth those long and rich chains of sound which

"bring all heaven before the eyes,"

as old Milton sang. I feel, when I think of this organ-playing, as if I had taken leave of the greatest music for ever; since, in that exercise of his art, the amount of science he would bring was animated by a radiant fancy, often dispensed with on like occasions; the want of which is supposed to be disguised by the glory of the sound, and the skilful intertexture of the parts. More perfectly, every genial sympathy, every sense of calm practical approval,

could not be gratified. There was the true, gracious, gifted man, old in experience, but young in the quickness of his sensibilities, to be heard—that day, it seems to me, more remarkably than ever. He was giving and receiving pleasure without parade; and from a store which had never been fuller of the highest thoughts and the richest fancies. Such things must come to an end; but they are never to be forgotten.

In the evening, chance brought the conversation on the ground of Italian music. He spoke again, in warm terms of admiration, of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell"—and, to my surprise, with a good-natured cordiality, of Donizetti's "Fille du Regiment." "It is so merry," he said, "with so much of the real soldier's life in it. They call it bad;* and to be sure," he

* I cannot resist availing myself of such an authority, to point out that the severe and unfriendly antagonism betwixt the different great schools of European music, which, of late, seems to have become fashionable, has not been fallen into by the most severely scientific masters of their art. A raw student, fresh from Germany, with a few chords and *Burschen* phrases, and a great deal of tobacco smoke, may fancy it orthodox to say, as I once heard pompously said, regarding the Italian Opera, "It has not the slightest interest for *me*"—and turn contemptuously on his heel; but Haydn and Mozart had more cordiality, discretion, and Catholicism. Even of grave, solid Sebastian Bach, it is told,

continued, with a half humorous tone of self-correction, "it is surprising how easily one can become used to bad music." Then he began to ask about Verdi—having heard that there was something like a new effect in some of his *finales;* and he would have this described, and shown to him, as well as could be done. He expressed a wish, too, to hear Handel's organ *Concertos* properly played—speaking about them doubtfully, and with hesitation, because of the frivolous and old-fashioned passages for *solo* stops, with which they were full—talked eagerly of the *Grand Opera* at Paris, as of a theatre for which one day he might be asked to write (I almost think that some negotiations had passed on the subject)—and referred to his sojourn in Rome, as one which had been full of the highest and most important influences upon his career. It was *apropos* of Rome, that some one mentioned Shelley's "Cenci," which had been

by Dr. Forkel, that being intimate with Hasse, the opera composer and Signora Faustina the *prima donna* (both settled in the Saxon capital), "he was always received in the most honourable manner at Dresden, and often went thither to hear the opera. He generally took his eldest son with him. He used to say in joke, some days before his departure, 'Friedemann, shall we go again to hear the pretty Dresden songs?'"

given to him by one of his English friends. He spoke of it with almost angry dislike. "No; it is too horrible! it is abominable. I cannot admire such a poem!"

The next morning, Mendelssohn drove with us to Lauterbrunnen. The view of the *Jungfrau* and the *Silberhorn* was superb as we went up the valley. Nor can ever have the fall of the *Staubbach* looked more magical than it did in the bright light of that late summer day,—its waters gleaming like a shower of rockets launched over the edge of the high cliff, their expended fires spreading and mingling as they fell and faded. Almost my last distinct remembrance of Mendelssohn is seeing him standing within the arch of the rainbow—which, as every reader of "Manfred" knows, the *Witch of the Alps* flings round the feet of the cascade—looking upward, rapt and serious, thoroughly enjoying the scene. My very last is the sight of him turning down the road to wend back to Interlachen alone, while we turned up to cross the Wengern Alp to Grindelwald. I thought even then, as I followed his figure, looking none the younger for the loose dark coat and the wide-brimmed straw hat bound with black crape

which he wore, that he was too much depressed and worn, and walked too heavily! But who could have dreamed that his days on earth were so rapidly drawing to a close?

The public records of the following November have already detailed, at sufficient length, such particulars of the last hours of the composer as I could here narrate. How the news of Mendelssohn's death was received in England, and by what manner of regret it was and is followed here, we know. That in his own land his fame for the future is solid, may be hoped, and, I think, believed, with good assurance. That his countrymen, however, have in the mean time done their character for good faith, constancy, and reverence for Genius and Virtue, no honour, by their change of note, after death, concerning one whom they had followed and fawned upon while he was living, is sadly true. When I remember the affection and idolatry of which Mendelssohn seemed to be the object at Leipsic—when I recall how the light of his presence there made a second-rate burgher town the centre of musical interest and attraction to

all Germany—nay, to all Europe—it becomes sickening to think, that no sooner was he cold in his grave, than his shallow and fickle townsmen began to question among themselves how far they had been administering to a real greatness, and whether there were not left behind among them some new prophets better than their departed oracle—by whom the musical notoriety of Leipsic, and the self-importance of its citizens, could be perpetuated.—We English have so long sat under German censure as a people hard, practical, wanting in musical taste, enthusiasm, and reverence—that this sudden coolness and indifference, nay even depreciation, with which the name and the works of Mendelssohn were treated immediately after his decease, in his own land, and by his own townsmen, must be recorded as facts which should silence the cavillers for ever!—The forgetfulness into which the very burial-places of Mozart and Gluck were allowed to fall by the Viennese—the appeal of Beethoven, in the last hours of his earthly desolation and pain, to the charitable aid of an English Artists' Society—are not more emphatic as an answer, to those who have been accustomed to exalt German reverence at the sympathy

of British selfishness, than the story of the first performance of "Elijah" in Leipsic, after the decease of its composer, to a room only half filled—than the immediate attempt made there to place upon the pedestal vacated by so melancholy and untimely a calamity, an idol no worthier of exaltation than Herr Schumann. Thus, at least, we English do not prove our admiration and our constancy!

Nor is the philosophical ease with which old allegiances are shaken off, and the professions of yesterday are falsified by the qualifications of to-day, a sign which bodes well for the future of German Music. There can be no real faith,—but in its place only an egotistic and vapouring desire of self-glorification—in a world where *phenomena* such as the Leipsic exhibitions I have mentioned, are not only possible, but, I fear, common. That feverish impatience of everything like duty and obligation, that wordy crusade in destruction of established things, without the least wholesome or consistent plan for their reconstruction or replacement—which have been so singularly displayed in the recent political movements in Germany, and so lamentably, as giving despotic folly a new lease

of power to misgovern—have seized upon Music,—not, indeed, to sap its foundations, but to bring Babel-worship into its temples. To examine and illustrate the nature and bearings of this anarchical outbreak, and to write its history, may be left, however, for future musical journalists. Let us rather still linger for a moment on the peaceful side of the Rubicon.

It will be thought by many that the present is too early a period for pronouncing a fair judgment on Mendelssohn as a composer, or for venturing to point out the place he is destined to hold in the history of German music. Immediate survivors are, and should be, always, more or less, at the mercy of their sympathies. That which is the newest, enjoys in its very novelty a temporary advantage, which must be allowed for as a flattering, if not a false light. It must have occurred to every musical reader as strange that, while so much space in the fourth volume of Burney's "History," is devoted to the executive powers of certain singers, and to analytical lectures upon operas and opera composers, whose very names are now forgotten, —there is no attempt, forty years after Handel's decease, to estimate the vast and permanent gain

added to Music by Handel's mastery over, and perfection of, the *Oratorio*. There are many reasons, furnished by both theory and precedent, for waiting.

On the other hand, the temptation to speak is great, in the present case;—seeing that a section of musicians is already professing to take leave of Mendelssohn as one who has closed a great period; and after whom, no more great works shall be produced, save by an utter re-arrangement of every known form, principle, and material of Music. The Art, say they, when fully ripe, must begin to rot, or else be born entirely anew. If Poetry there is still to be, it must speak in a tongue unknown, savage, and to which no established rules or canons can be applied. The old fountain is dry,—the familiar book is closed.

Now, this mechanical speculation and systematizing—curiously enough the most prevalent among the wildest folk—however comfortable it may be to all who love theories more than facts, and who prefer any "idea," be it ever so paradoxical, to truths which develope themselves slowly and with many exceptional features,—cannot be admitted to dispose of the future

prospects of German music.—Let a few examples be offered to these dealers about of doom and discouragement. — Have matters hitherto proceeded with this chronological regularity—this regular going up the ladder and down again? Does the recognized supremacy of Beethoven's great *Symphonies* close the ear to Weber's *Overtures?*—Does the fantasy of his *Pianoforte Concerto* in G so bewitch us as to leave us no emotions at the service of the "*Concert Stück?*" Or take a yet more extreme instance;—there is no part of a concert, whatsoever be its ingredients, at which the odd, delicate, wayward, yet thoroughly artistic music of Chopin, if rendered in anything like the right spirit, comes too late.—For delicious spontaneous melody, and for a Shakspearian profusion of the clearest, most beautiful, and noblest thoughts, Mendelssohn cannot be rated as the equal of either Mozart or of Beethoven. All three were masters of musical science and orchestral combination. Yet the *Symphonies*, *Overtures*, and *Quartetts* of Mendelssohn can be played after those by Beethoven, without loss of effect; whereas those of Mozart cannot. Do instances like these illustrate the existence of formal and

sequentially necessary preferences? Do they indicate to us a world of which the limits have been reached, and in which constructive ingenuity has been exhausted;—where the public, moreover, has been rendered so fastidious by its worship of supreme genius that it will bow to nothing less supreme? Assuredly not. Leaving this theory of degradation to those who are concerned in proving it, let us see what characteristics of Mendelssohn's genius can be assembled, without rhapsody or false enthusiasm.

The amazing musical activity of his brief career has hardly yet been sufficiently considered. It was not maintained at the sacrifice of every other faculty and pursuit. To use a phrase applied by himself to another, "Not only did he love to give pleasure, but he would have some for himself, too." He could manage to read, and to think, and to make himself the delight of the choicest and most intellectual society wherever he went:—he kept up his taste for painting and for looking at pictures; he was devoted in all his domestic relations; his time was wasted by the importunities of coarse and self-interested people, from whose assaults there was no possibility of entirely escaping:—

he did the work of a strong and busy man, for some years, as merely conductor of concerts and festivals in Germany and in England;—and yet the list of complete works, produced by him, and sanctioned as such, is, its bulk considered, among the longest lists by the great composers, that could be cited. The mass of unpublished manuscript, too, that will never see the light, is known by the thematic catalogue of his works left behind him, to be still very large. And with him there was no slovenliness, no taking for granted, no gross and blurred manuscript, no hurried pages, no flagrant platitudes thrust in to do emergency-work. His music was the best that he could make; and its high finish is only equalled by its evenness of quality. He was always willing to retouch a new composition, without that irritable finicality, which, enamoured of retouching, ends by depriving the work of all nature and proportion. It is well known that the "Elijah" was largely altered after its first performance. The "Walpurgis Night" lay unfinished for many years—so, I believe, did the third *Symphony* in A minor,—and the *Symphony* in A major was withheld from the press during its composer's life-time,

because he expressed his intention of remodelling the first movement. He was as conscientious and exact as he was quick. I can hardly name one bar of slighted music which bears his signature. Some hard and dry and (as he called them) "rebellious" compositions were put forth in his young days; but they are knotted up, as it were, with close care and pains, not dashed off with insolence. They were the works of a boy anxious to prove himself a man among the double-refined intelligences of those by whom he was surrounded; and parading his science, his knowledge of the ancients, his mastery over all the learning of his Art. Year by year, less aridity, more grace, flexibility, and versatility, marked the thinking and the writing of Mendelssohn. There is the distance of a long life betwixt his early stringed *quartett* in A minor with the *lied* prefixed, and his last *quintett* in B flat, with its *adagio* (of all modern movements the most grandiose and impassioned) and its *scherzo* on a theme

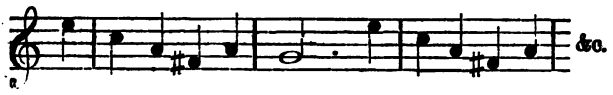
as quaintly national as some old English "fancy."

danced under the mistletoe at Christmas-time, or on the green at May-day.

That Mendelssohn possessed a natural vein of such rich, flowing melody, as Mozart and Beethoven commanded, cannot be claimed for him. Yet as a melodist he has been misunderstood and undervalued in no common degree —the fate, by the way, of every new composer who is more than a melodist. Those who have passed hasty judgment on him as "dry" have done so rather on the strength of some one work which does not suit their humour than on the bulk of his writings. Further, to every man's definition of melody, there goes more of temperament, association, and extraneous sympathy, than professors or amateurs will willingly admit. To those who have estimated Mendelssohn as poor in melody, let me recall from his instrumental works alone such themes as the slow movement of his first P. F. *Concerto*, the slow movement to his *Symphony* in A major, the theme of his *Overture* "Melusine," the *menuetto* of his *Quartett* in D major, the theme of the *andante* to his first *Sonata* with *violoncello*— all the subjects of the several movements of his violin *Concerto*—the *notturno* in his "Midsum-

mer Night's Dream" music—the *scherzo* in his A minor *Symphony*. If the list be not lengthened, it is from no want of example: enough specimens, however, have been cited to establish the proposition that those raising such a cry must err from either wilfulness or ignorance, even as those do who—on the strength of having sat through "The Messiah" till they know it by heart and fancy themselves profound Handelians therefore—deny to Handel the possession of grace, variety, and versatility of idea, in order that they may exalt his sublimity.

Or is variety brought forward as an indispensable requisite for the Genius who is to rank among those of the first class? Here, again, I think, Mendelssohn will be found to stand the test; in fact, the admirable propriety of his productions proves versatility as the attribute of one who wrote for every conceivable purpose, if not in every style. Who, for instance, that heard his "Ave Maria," or "Lauda Sion," could fancy either a Protestant hymn? Who that listened to his treatment of the *Corale* in his "Lobgesang" could imagine that noble movement belonging to a Catholic service of praise? The choruses to Racine's "Athalie," and to the trans-

lation of "Œdipus" are, in some respects, written under the same conditions. Yet the former is at once as French and Israelitish as the latter is German and Greek. There is not in Mehul—no, not even in Auber—a touch of melody more perfectly Gallic in its humour than this subject in the introductory chorus to "Athalie,"—

Yet how old-world and Jewish is the leading phrase of the *Overture*, with its antiphonic repetition, in another key;—while the wail on the passage to the English words—

"O David's regal home!"—

is a true strain from the harp, that, being hung on the willows of Babylon, could not give forth "the Lord's song in a strange land."

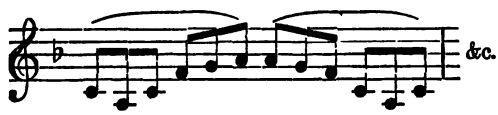
What the music of the Greeks was we can less dream or divine. Its rules bore, so far as we can gather, no such relation to our present canons of musical beauty, as did the rules of their sculpture and architecture to those of the moderns. But do not a symmetrical beauty, a sensual grandeur, a spiritual glory, akin to those

of the "Ilyssus," breathe through that delicious chorus in the "Œdipus"—

"Thou comest here to the land, O friend!"

so flowing, so grave, so entrancing, and withal so voluptuous? I know of nothing in choral music more sonorous in tone, more temperately rich in accompaniment, moving more gradually with a sonorous and stately *crescendo*, than the close of that movement. There not merely is the mellow fullness of the tenor instruments admirable, but the form of triplets in the accompaniment to the passage which sings the praises of the

"mighty God *Poseidon*,"

is new, and, by the flux and reflux of the figure—

indicates as closely and poetically as Art can indicate—

"the swell of Summer's ocean."

What Beethoven was to the rivulet in his "Pastoral Symphony," Mendelssohn is to the

great ocean, in the close of this admirable Greek chorus, and in the immense opening of his "Meerestille" *Overture*;—the former a sea-picture in music, which may be paired off with the "Quos Ego" of Rubens, or the notable "Triumph of Galatea;" the latter a piece of calm as limitless, as deep, as sublime, as any spread forth on his canvas by the great Van der Velde.—The above, be it lastly observed, are from the same fountain of inspiration as could turn into a volcano flinging out fierce and stormy fire, when the subject was a Pagan revel on the "First Walpurgis night;"—or, with a wish, could change like a dream, into showers of dew amid the moonlight—bearing the delicate and freakish burden of "a roundel and a faëry song," to the most exquisite faëry poetry in the world — that of Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream."

I could continue these illustrations of variety from the single and concerted songs of Mendelssohn to a great length. In his instrumental music I could point to the novelty of form given by him to the *scherzo*, to his having originated the "*Lied ohne worte*," were further examples needed. It is true that favourite

chords, intervals, closes, and phrases, recur again in his music—that he had a shy way of his own of returning to his first subjects as if the humour was to perplex, not to satisfy, the ear—a plainness, sometimes amounting to meagreness, in the setting of his instrumental melodies, arising from the most Spartan resolution to avoid meretriciousness of garniture,—and that these things establish a manner—a manner, moreover, as we unhappily know in England, at once tempting and not hard to imitate. But from some such manner no musical composer is free, save Beethoven—who may be said, with a pardonable stretch of language, to be only recognizable by his resembling no one, not even himself. Those who have accepted Mozart as a composer above criticism and beyond reproach, will be shocked to be told that in him there is as distinct a manner, as discernible a humour, as constant a reiteration of close, chord, and passage, in his writings, vocal, instrumental, sacred, and symphonic, as in those of Mendelssohn; but the truth nevertheless is susceptible of proof.

Once more, as regards devotional elevation of tone, wrought out in forms of the utmost originality, we shall find Mendelssohn rising in

proportion to the dignity of his subject. His sacred works are so much the best known of his compositions to the general world of English amateurs, that it is almost needless to offer instances from them; though one or two numbers (to use the technical phrase) of such rare felicity occur that it becomes a pleasure to recall them. Among these are the burial chorus, "O happy and blest are they," in "St. Paul;"—the tenor *solo* "The shadows of Death," in the Lobgesäng;—and the entire passage from "Elijah" beginning with the persecution of the triumphant Prophet by *Jezebel*, which conducts *Elijah* through the wilderness, where he is comforted by angels, and lastly is permitted to hear the "still small voice" announcing the coming of the Most High,—and to behold a vision of God enthroned among his Cherubim and Seraphim!—So various and progressive is the interest excited by the earlier portions of this admirable *Oratorio*, that the extreme force, expression, and vividly majestic sublimity of this peculiar portion, do not strike the hearer till he begins to reflect. Among mountains the highest peak does not always look very high. But the composer him-

self felt that—after he had painted the Prophet binding the ungrateful land in a curse, wrestling in prayer to the confusion of the priests of Baal, and receiving the last seal of Divine favour upon his mission by the opening of the heavens and the showers therefrom of the gracious rain upon the fainting land vouchsafed in answer to his call,—there was still a nobler thing to be told—there was still the Creator to be vindicated as greater than the greatest of his ministers. After the chastisement, the miracle, the triumph, there was still to come the humiliation of the mortal before the Monarch of angels and archangels.—That such a thought was present in his mind, when he wrote "Elijah," Mendelssohn's friends know; that he was not unequal to its expression, every ear and heart can bear witness that are familiar with the *Oratorio*.—In sacred, as distinguished from service music, nothing comparable to this whole superb scene has been written since Handel's time. Nay, it may be said without fear of disproof, that the "Rex tremendæ" and "Confutatis" of Mozart's "Requiem," and the loftiest portions of Beethoven's *Masses*, do not exceed in expression and power the four choruses, "He watching

over Israel," "He that shall endure to the end," "Behold, God the Lord passed by," and "Holy, holy,"—taken as a series, with or without their introductory matter or their connecting links. With regard to such inspirations, there is neither doubt nor fear of the future. They are, as Beethoven proudly said of his own music, "safe!"

Regarding Mendelssohn's skill in managing his orchestra, or his science as a writer in parts, there has never been, so far as I am aware, the slightest dispute.

Surely the above list of characteristics, then, makes up no common claim for a place among the noblest worthies of German music, for him by whom they were possessed. What further he might have achieved had his appointed time in this world been longer, it is idle to dream. Those who knew him, know that he could not and would not stand still; that every year of life brought with it its ripening, and sweetening, and deepening influences — and new power, and new pleasure, and new hope in his new fame—that he felt how much might still be done in Music, and longed to try to do it—Vain was this, as are all earthly longings,

and yet not wholly vain!—Such very aspiration did its part in completing the life and character of one who was happy because of his gifts and because of the love that they brought him—but happier in his honest and ceaseless desire to brighten, and purify, and extend them for the service of Music, and the service of his country.—There may come a day, yet, when the example of Mendelssohn's life, yet more than of his works, may be invoked in Germany. May this come soon for the sake of a people, who should be as great as they are gifted, and for the sake of an art which has risen to such eminence in their land!

THE END.

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